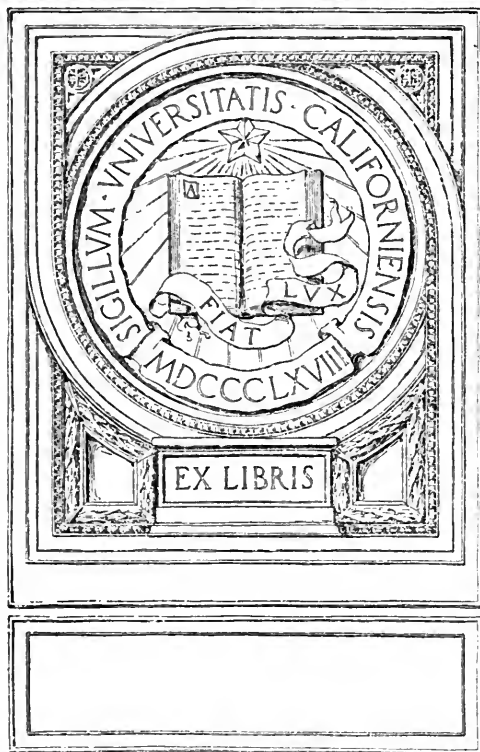


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AN AUSTRALASIAN WANDER-YEAR

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AN AUSTRALASIAN WANDER-YEAR

H. M. VAUGHAN

WITH FORTY-ONE
ILLUSTRATIONS

WANDER-YEAR
IN AUSTRALASIA
AND THE
SOUTH PACIFIC

LONDON
MARTIN SECKER
NUMBER FIVE JOHN STREET
ADELPHI

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FOREWORD

THE ensuing pages on Australasian travel have been chiefly written from the point of view of the picturesque, and do not profess to deal either with the past history or the present political outlook of the Commonwealth of Australia. They are especially intended for the benefit of the British visitor to Australia and New Zealand, who, I venture to think, will find various matters of interest and some practical hints in these pages. It is a record of recent travel over a large area in the Antipodes, so that my own experiences and expeditions may supply some useful information to those who are anxious to become acquainted with some of the natural beauties and with the acknowledged show-sights of Australasia.

As to the best time of the year to visit Australia, the months of June, July and August (the southern winter) are the most suitable for Queensland, with its tropical climate ; whilst from August to November the weather is generally delightful in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The winters in Tasmania and the South Island of New Zealand are often long, cold and wet, so that these places should be visited between November and March. On the other hand, the climate of the North Island of New Zealand, perhaps the most lovely and interesting of all lands in the Southern Hemisphere, is usually pleasant all the year, with the exception of the months of May, June and July. For the South Sea Islands June and July are always reckoned the ideal tourist season for the popular trip to Fiji and Samoa, and in any case these

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islands should be avoided in the summer months from November to May.

The intending traveller need fear neither discomfort nor short-commons anywhere, unless he choose to go up-country to pay visits at the more distant sheep—or cattle—stations that are far removed from a railway. In the different State capitals (with the exception of Brisbane) there are good first-class hotels, and in the smaller towns and in the many pleasure resorts by coast and in mountains the hotels are also comfortable and well-managed. The leading hotels in the great cities generally charge from twelve to sixteen shillings a day *en pension*, whilst the rate of the country hotels is from eight to ten shillings a day. There are, however, in most places to be found very good boarding-houses, which are usually frequented by a good social *clientèle*, where the charges are appreciably lower than in the big hotels, whilst service, *cuisine* and general comfort are fully as good, and sometimes better. For a long stay, therefore, in Sydney or Melbourne, I think it preferable to select one of the many better-class boarding-houses, where the tariff varies from two guineas to three and a half guineas a week. As a rule, the food provided everywhere in Australia is fairly good of its kind, but the meals are often somewhat heavy for so warm a climate. For the type of tourist who is ambitious to see as much as possible, Sydney makes an excellent starting-point for the many surrounding places of interest on land, as it is also the centre of an immense network of steamship lines that will bear the traveller direct to every possible place of interest on both the Australian coast and over the whole expanse of the Southern Seas. Add to these advantages, the delightful climate (except in the months of January and February) and the many facilities for sea bathing.

As to the expenses incurred by a trip to Australia, the cost of

the voyage out from London to Sydney (first-class) varies considerably, from the eighty-two pounds or thereabouts charged for a single-berth cabin by the Orient and P. & O. Lines, which sail by way of the Suez Canal, and the forty-five pounds charged by the Aberdeen and Blue Funnel Lines, which follow the Cape Town route. For a return ticket there is always some reduction on the price of a double fare. As to the cost of living and travelling combined in Australia itself, my own experience will again prove of service. During a twelve-month spent in the Antipodes, which period included many journeys by rail, by road and by steamer, covering in all nearly thirteen thousand miles, I found that my average expenditure worked out to something under one guinea a day, and this calculation included many necessary purchases and other incidental payments. It cannot therefore be said that a round of the most interesting trips in the Antipodes is of a very costly nature, in comparison with the many advertised tours undertaken in other parts of the world. In the Australasian hotels there is, as I have already hinted, a sufficiency of solid comfort, but there is an absence of the extreme luxury and over-elaborate service one encounters in so many of the hotels at home, and still more in the United States; nevertheless, personally, I was almost invariably satisfied with what I found, and missed a good many of the meretricious splendours and superfluous luxuries of the European hotels rather agreeably.

As to clothing, the sun and dust of Australia are very severe on dark-coloured clothes and on all rough materials. Light-coloured flannels or smooth grey cloth are best suited to the climate. Generally speaking, warmth and dryness are the usual climatic conditions out in Australia, but short sudden spells of very cold winds and of wet weather are pretty frequent, so that the visitor ought to be provided with some warm

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garments in the event of these changes. A hot-water bag, a good rug, and a sun-helmet will also all be found acceptable at various times. Of course there are excellent shops in all the big cities, where everything needed by the traveller can be obtained.

Finally, I should like to add that, in order adequately to enjoy a tour in this part of the globe, the traveller should make himself acquainted on the voyage out with some of the leading works on Australian discovery, history, development, social conditions and modern policy. Again, from my own experience I can state that it is far more profitable to read beforehand of a new country than to visit the country first and study its conditions afterwards from books. And particularly in the case of Australia, it is expedient to bring some degree of real knowledge of its past and present conditions to a better understanding and enjoyment of its sights and daily life. Above all things, in Australia the daily papers of the country should be read regularly, so that the traveller may throw himself so far as possible for the time being into the actual passing of events in the Commonwealth. In many respects Australia and New Zealand may be regarded as mirrors of the future, into which the average Briton can often look with much edification to himself and his early preconceived ideas.

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I

FROM LONDON TO SYDNEY

SIX weeks all but a day from Tilbury Dock to Sydney, from the capital of the Mother Country to the chief city of the Daughter-State in the Antipodes ! Six long weeks of voluntary and far from unpleasant imprisonment in a great marine caravanserai with upwards of a thousand of one's fellow-creatures !

Whether one elects to travel out to Australia by the P. & O., or the Orient, or the German-Lloyd Lines, the voyage by way of the Suez Canal will not vary either in interest or in point of comfort, and life on a great liner is pretty much the same over all parts of the globe. Once the Mediterranean with its classical headlands and its historic cities is traversed, and the Suez Canal with its modern engineering interest is passed, one only awaits with impatience the final goal. For there is little to attract after leaving Suez ; even the novelty of seeing flying-fishes begins to pall on the novice long ere he reaches Australian waters. Indeed, the sole oasis in that long desert of marine monotony from Suez to Freemantle, composed mostly of sweltering heat and boisterous trade-winds, is the day spent ashore at Colombo, which affords a gorgeous peep of the true Shiny East to the traveller. For myself, I shall never forget that wonderful six-mile drive through the native quarters of

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Colombo upon the flat palm-fringed road that leads to breezy Mount Lavinia, overlooking the surf-vexed shore, for I was wholly unprepared for the positive riot of gaudy colours that greeted my eyes during the course of that hot afternoon. The dark impassive faces, and shining brown skins ; the pinks and whites and yellows of the gay dresses ; the great fronds of the coco-palms rustling overhead in the vigorous trade-wind ; the brilliant blossoms and strange fruits ; the indescribable but fascinating odours of the East ; the gaudy temples and demure mission churches ; all served to compose a kaleidoscopic picture, of which I recognised instinctively every contributing feature. From the drab commonplace of the ship's daily existence, I seemed to be suddenly plunged, as it were, into a bath of strange forms and scents and hues. It was all too violent and bizarre a transition of environment ; and somehow the brief episode of the visit to Mount Lavinia recalled to my mind one of the old legends of my native Welsh country-side, where in olden days peasants used now and then by accident to step into a fairy ring, and for a few moments heard unearthly music and saw sights of unbelievable loveliness, whose haunting recollections served to sadden their lives and fill their thoughts with useless desire for the unattainable till their life's end.

With this precious mental possession of those few enchanted hours spent ashore at Colombo wherewith to chew the cud of reflection, I was enabled to face the ten days of vacuous weariness of life aboard ship across the deep blue waters of the Indian Ocean. For our boat was making good headway for Australian waters with a strong nor'-wester behind us, so that all on board were impatiently awaiting the first glimpse of the shores of ancient New Holland, which now goes by the name of Western Australia.

The newly-sprung township of Freemantle, which from a little distance appears to be merely a casual collection of tin-roofed sheds and cottages, cannot be called an attractive place in any weather ; but when viewed from the deck of an incoming liner in the early morning hours, under a leaden sky and amid cold gusty showers, it presents a terribly forlorn appearance. The low sandy coast-line and the indifferent roadstead, only partially sheltered by the rocky islands of Garden and Rottnest, scarcely offer much promise for the future growth of the prospective great port of Western Australia, which will be the terminus of the Trans-Continental Railway, that is destined to link up the vast mineral fields of the west with the railway-system of the more populous and settled south-eastern portions of the continent. Unkind people and acid critics declare that private interests and the coveted votes of the neighbouring large city of Perth have together operated in the choice of a harbour in so unpromising and dreary a spot, to the unfair rejection of the natural claims of King George's Sound, on the other side of Cape Leeuwin. Be that as it may (and as a traveller I know nothing of the arguments for and against the case), Freemantle seemingly owns a very inadequate and exposed harbour, which in certain winds can only be entered with difficulty by the modern monsters of the P. & O. and Orient Lines.

In any case, the first impression of Australia, as gained at Freemantle, cannot possibly be a favourable one for the anxious voyager who has seen no land since leaving Colombo ; and in my case, further disappointment awaited me when I learned that our steamer had failed to make that narrow harbour-entrance owing to the rough weather. This meant a tedious wait of thirty hours, riding at anchor, during which period of impatience we watched the pilot's steam launch, the

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Lady Forrest, being tossed like a cork on the savage, foam-flecked, pale green billows. On the following morning it was adjudged safe to make a second attempt between the squalls and showers, with the joyful result that in less than an hour's time we found our ship duly lined up to the wharf, where an expectant crowd of Westralians was waiting to greet our arrival.

What is the first Australian peculiarity that will strike a new-comer? Certainly not the crowd on the landing-stage, for all is British, sturdily and triumphantly British, in voice, dress and deportment. Of course, I can only answer for my own feelings, when I confess that the first novelty that drew my attention was a sight of the common weeds sprouting on the waste soil between the quay and the railway station. Instead of our common English daisies and dandelions, I perceived many plants of a pale yellow marguerite, of a species I had never remarked before, not even as a cultivated variety in our gardens at home. How strange! Only a noxious weed, yet it was this wild yellow daisy that in my own case marked the first of many, many notes of difference between the Old Britain of Europe and the New Britain of the Southern Seas.

It was, as I have said, a cold squally day, with only occasional gleams of sunshine between the showers. Yet a number of us made our way by rail to Perth, the capital of Western Australia. It was an interesting journey to the stranger, for the line crosses the historic Swan River, celebrated for its black swans, and then passes through a sandy zone of scrubby half-cleared country, that man's industry is only gradually bringing into subjection. On all sides, from the train window, my observant eye caught sight of lovely flowering shrubs and plants, and in particular of a certain climbing vine with gorgeous purple blossoms. It was useless to inquire its name of any of my

fellow-passengers, so I had to console myself for my ignorance on this occasion with Tennyson's philosophy :

“ What is it ? A learned man
Might give it a clumsy name ;
Let him name it who can,
The beauty will be the same.”

Of one native flower, however, I did learn the name, much to my satisfaction, and that was the Westralian Boronia, a tall plant having long graceful sprays of brown and yellow flowers that possess a strong perfume, somewhat reminiscent of Indian all-spice. It is a great favourite throughout Australia, and though only found in a wild state in the sandy deserts of Western Australia, it is largely cultivated both for sale and ornament near Melbourne. Another unique plant of this region whose name I discovered, was the curious flower called the “ Kangaroo's Paw,” of a velvety texture and brilliantly coloured in green and scarlet.

Perth is rather a handsome city, wholly rebuilt in recent years and admirably laid out. I was told its streets were deemed too narrow for the traffic of the place, but to my British eyes they seemed sufficiently broad, which goes to prove that the Australian, dwelling in a land of ample elbow-room, feels the absolute necessity of superabundant space ; whilst at home in our over-populated island we rather expect a little jostling and crowding in our busy streets. I was delighted with the arcades overshadowing the pavements of the business quarters, which are equally serviceable in shower or in sunshine, and form an agreeable and picturesque characteristic of all Australian towns.

.
We left Freemantle at dark to enter once more upon the tossing waves of the Indian Ocean, and on awaking next

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morning we found ourselves within sight of Cape Leeuwin, the south-westerly extremity of the island-continent. All day we kept at no great distance from the rocky, forbidding coast-line until night fell, when we were almost opposite the entrance of King George's Sound, the good-natural harbour of Albany, that has now been practically discarded in favour of dismal Freemantle. Watching this dreary iron-bound coast, with the clouds of snowy spray flung constantly high in air, and its many treacherous rocky islets, I grew to understand how it came about that the early Dutch and Portuguese navigators in these seas forbore to disembark and explore the hidden interior. No wonder they preferred to report to their Governors at Goa or Batavia that New Holland was a rocky region, where it was unsafe to land on account of rough seas and hidden shoals, and equally dangerous to penetrate on account of the lack of food and of the hordes of hostile, naked and repulsive savages who peopled the melancholy grey forests that were visible from the shore.

Two whole days were spent in crossing the Great Australian Bight, with favourable winds and over sunlit blue waters, and on the third morning we were passing through Investigator Straits, with the long line of Kangaroo Island to the south. After the late heavy spring rainfalls the hills as seen from the ship's deck showed of a bright green with the newly-sprung grass, which set off well the sombre "Bush"¹ of dark gum-trees that fringed the sky-line. On Sunday afternoon we steamed through St Vincent's Gulf, and finally anchored at the Outer Harbour of Adelaide, of which city I shall speak later.

From Adelaide it is a two days' run to Melbourne, of which

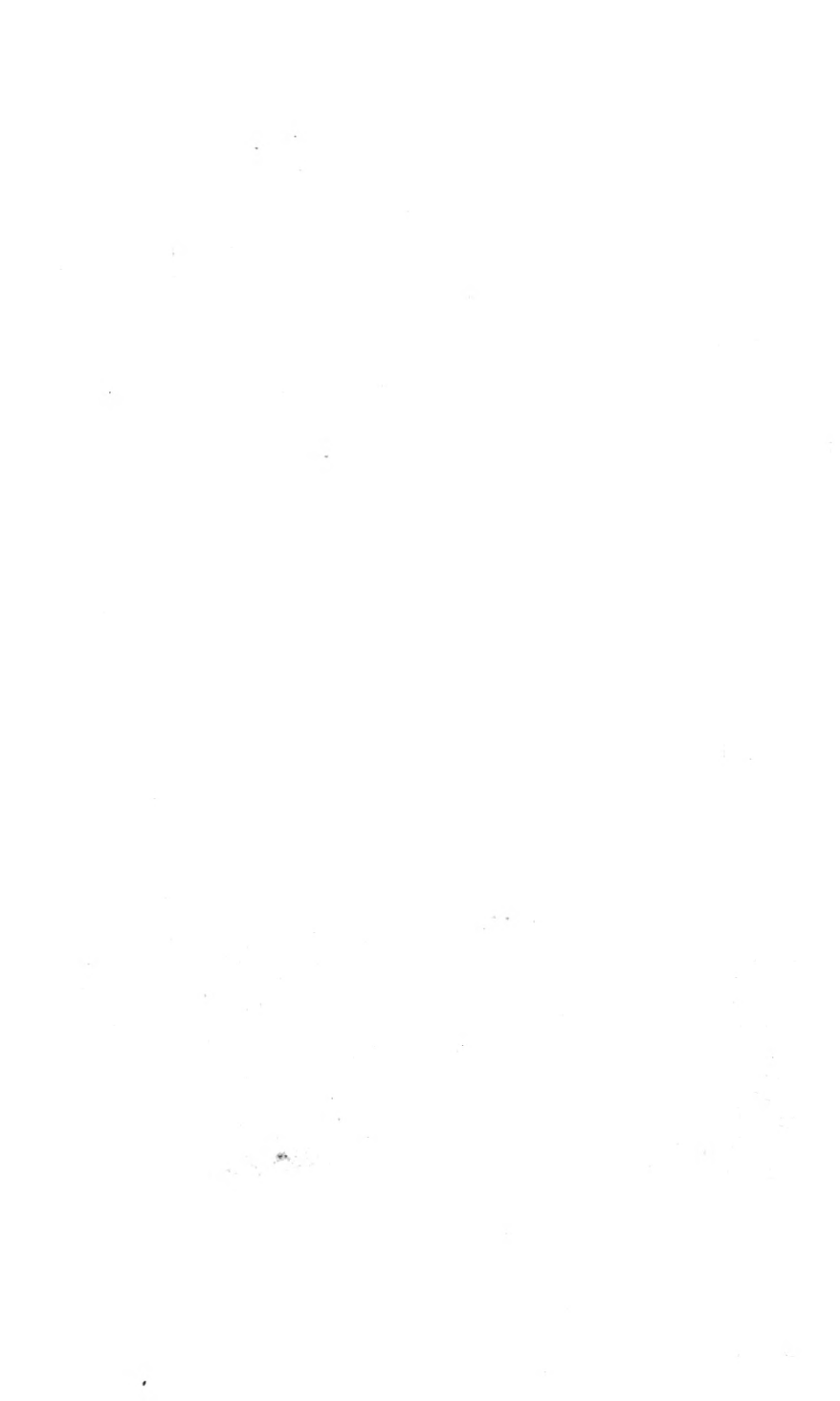
¹ The expression "Bush" is everywhere used in Australia to denote the uncleared primeval forest lands. To get "bushed" is to become lost in the gum-forests.



Entering Sydney Harbour



Australian Country Coach



place this my first brief experience was not a fortunate one. For we sailed up Port Phillip in the teeth of a tearing wind, with ice-cold showers at intervals, arriving at Port Melbourne so much behind our scheduled time that many of our unfortunate passengers, to whom time meant money, missed the evening express train to Sydney, which they had relied on catching. It was, however, pleasant for me to distinguish from the heights of the boat-deck the welcoming faces of Australian friends in the waiting crowd on the quay below, a cheering apparition which made me feel I was not wholly a stranger in a strange land. I passed the evening very pleasantly with my friends on shore, and like all new-comers to Melbourne, I was greatly struck with

“ The parallels of her long streets,
With lamps like angels shining all a-row.”

After my fleeting glance of Melbourne, we sailed next morning out of the narrow entrance of Port Phillip, commonly called “ The Rip,” into a nasty choppy sea ruffled by a bitter southerly wind, for Bass’s Straits are rarely calm. Next day, after turning the promontory of Cape Howe, I began to feel a change in the atmosphere as we came in sight of the New South Wales coast-line ; there was a warmer and more genial feeling in the air, and gradually I began to discard heavy overcoat and muffler and other winter garments, the farther we steamed north. Owing to our enforced delay at Freemantle our ship was nearly a whole day late in her arrival at Port Jackson, the port of Sydney, so that it was barely daylight when our liner bisected the broad passage between the famous Heads. Slowly we crept up the harbour in a soft pearly-grey mist, and finally berthed at the unluxurious hour of 6 A.M. at the wharf of historic Sydney Cove, which is now called by the less romantic name of Circular Quay.

II

SYDNEY

I REMEMBER reading once, many years ago, in some chance volume of Australian reminiscences—I rather think it must have been in one of Ada Cambridge's books—that the writer's impression of Sydney was of a place where the sun never failed to shine each day; and an identical impression of almost unbroken sunshine remains also with me after some months' experience of the capital of New South Wales. Of course it rained occasionally, and sometimes the sky was overcast; nevertheless, when I look back on the many weeks I spent in Sydney, I can never picture the city and the harbour to myself except as under a sky of the deepest blue and basking in brilliant sunlight. And yet the climate has its admitted drawbacks, for its changes are often rapid and capricious. Soon after my arrival in September, perhaps the most perfect month in the whole Australian year, I can well recall a certain day with a high temperature and a blazing sun, yet with a hot westerly gale blowing furiously across the town, bending the trees, shrivelling the delicate young spring foliage, and smothering everything and everybody with the unclean dust of a great commercial city. A scorching hot morning is not infrequently followed by a sudden burst of cold wind from the south, the threatened approach of which is signalled by a flag displayed as a warning to all on the lofty campanile of the Post Office. This unpleasant phenomenon is nowadays called a "southerly buster," though in old colonial days it was known as a "brick-

fielder," from the red sand that was whirled through the air mingled with raindrops, and stained objects a brick-red colour. I well remember such an occasion in the latter part of October, when after a broiling hot morning, with the thermometer registering over 90° Fahr. in the shade, at about four o'clock in the afternoon one of these wild southerly gales sprung up, so that the temperature fell thirty degrees in almost as many minutes. At the critical moment I was proceeding to a large garden-party, and never shall I forget the strange spectacle of the havoc wrought by this sudden caprice of the weather, when the pitiless hurricane of dust and raindrops played cruel pranks with the well-equipped tea-tables on the lawn, with the white dresses and shady hats of the ladies, and with the tall silk hats of the men, who still cling fondly to this antiquated form of head-gear for social functions in the open. Notwithstanding these occasional vagaries, the climate of Sydney is on the whole delightful, with the exception of the hot and enervating months of January and February. If the sun is powerful, the air is usually tempered by a light breeze, and in any case Sydney sunshine seems to possess a quality of its own that never causes headache or sunstroke, no matter what figure the thermometer may mark. As a stranger, I used at first to regard it as a positive hardship to be kept within doors in such glorious weather, until I came at last to realise how prodigal of golden days was this favoured southern clime.

No wonder, therefore, the inhabitants of Sydney love the open-air life, with the result that Sydney itself has been nicknamed "the city of pleasure," when sky and sun and breeze and sparkling sea all invite and entice its citizens to bathe or boat or fish or frolic, so soon as ever they can decently escape from the trammels of domestic or mercantile affairs. The

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week-end is universally held sacred to the deity of amusement, as anyone can gather who notes the crowded outgoing trams and harbour ferry-boats every Saturday and Sunday throughout the year. It is extraordinary the number of amenities that Sydney offers to suit almost every taste. There are Bondi, and Coogee, and Manly, and other sandy beaches on the Pacific shores, where bathing and "surfing" and fishing can be enjoyed by thousands of pleasure-seekers. Indeed, one of the chief summer amusements of Sydney is the delightful and varied bathing, which can be obtained at small cost of time or money. There are public swimming-baths innumerable in all parts of the harbour, which are well patronised by persons of every age and of either sex. These are, of course, strongly guarded by palisades or by stout wire netting on account of the number of sharks which swarm everywhere, not only in the ocean but in every inlet and bay of Port Jackson itself. Swimmers taking headers from a boat certainly run the grave risk of a terrible death, though unfortunately many catastrophes of this nature do not teach the foolhardy a wholesome awe of this dreaded pest of all southern waters. Of recent years "surfing" has come into fashion on the ocean beaches, especially at Manly and Bondi. Surfing consists in making use of the huge rolling breakers as a means of floating or swimming to shore, and it is often practised by expert swimmers with surfing-boards, an idea that has been copied from a pastime of some of the South Sea Islanders. But, generally speaking, surfing really means hopping and dancing about in the boisterous foamy breakers, now jumping the unbroken wave, and now being carried willy-nilly towards the beach in the on-rushing mass of water. Women as well as men enjoy the fun of the thing, so that the more popular beaches often present the sight of thousands of persons dis-

porting themselves in the bracing surf any warm Saturday or Sunday, or even on the hot moonlit nights in the height of summer. Manly is perhaps the most patronised of the various ocean beaches, but personally I preferred Bondi, with its southern aspect and fresher air and its excellent bathing accommodation. To the sensible, surfing presents little or no danger, since there is usually a sufficiency of fellow-creatures beside one in the water, but the under-tow is often very strong and treacherous. The beaches too are steep and constantly changing, the sand seems to slip from the foothold with the backwash of the spent waves; and in the event of a bather being drawn by the under-tow out of his depth beyond the farthest line of breakers, he runs the double risk of drowning and of being disembowelled by the many sharks, which never penetrate within the disturbed area of the waves. Still, though I often saw mishaps and consequent rescues, yet the yearly list of fatalities amongst bathers is remarkably small, considering the immense number of foolish persons who always tempt Providence by doing rash things when in the water. Not the least agreeable part of the whole performance to my mind was the sun-bath after bathing, when one either lay on the beach or in a reserved compound, where one is dried at leisure by the warm sunny air, in pleasing contrast with the icy plunge and the subsequent scrub-and-shiver business that passes current by the name of bathing in our own chilly waters and inclement atmosphere at home.

In spite of its many undisputed attractions, I cannot altogether endorse the time-honoured enthusiasm evinced by so many visitors to Australia over the natural beauties of Sydney Harbour. From a commercial and strategic point of view, it may, for aught I know to the contrary, be truly the finest harbour in the whole Southern hemisphere; but it is certainly

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not the most beautiful from the standpoint of the artist. Its rocky shores are too low and too monotonous ; there is no background of lofty mountains, as at Hobart and Auckland ; and above all, the continuous development of the port of Sydney has not allowed much of its original appearance to survive the stress of modern progress. As one proceeds in one of the many comfortable ferry-steamers from headland to headland, and from inlet to inlet, one seems to carry away a confused impression of low rocky shores and islets, in places still clothed with insignificant scrub, but mostly covered with staring villas and cottages, diversified by foul and disfiguring factories, which latter are naturally on the increase every year. No doubt many years ago, in the days of the picturesque old sailing-ships and before the advent of smoke and suburbs, Port Jackson had its full share of beauties both natural and artificial ; so that perhaps the many eulogies of Sydney by travellers of a bygone age were not really exaggerated.

“ Thy harbour’s fair flower-crowned islands
See flags of all nations unfurled ;
Thou smilest from green sunlit highlands
To open thine arms to the world.
Dark East’s and fair West’s emulations
Resound from each hill-shadowed quay,
And over the songs of all nations,
The voice of the sea.”

Such a description may have been tolerably correct, even so recently as twenty years ago, when they were penned ; but, alas ! the flower-crowned islands of the poetess are now mostly crowned by chimney-stacks, and her green sunlit highlands occupied by tall sky-scrapers or mile upon mile of raw suburbs. But the old myth of “ Beautiful Sydney ” dies hard, and nobody wants to give it the *coup de grâce*.

And when all detraction possible has been made, I am more

than willing to admit that the famous harbour is always full of interest, so that my first experience of the little voyage from Circular Quay, which is the hub of Sydney, to Manly on a sunny afternoon, with a nor'-easter ruffling the pale green waters and with a dozen or more white-winged yachts tacking and scudding in the open, is indeed a memory to be treasured. Moreover, all the many evidences of material progress that offend the critical and artistic eye in the broad daylight disappear under the kindly veil of night, when the city and the harbour positively glitter like fairyland with the countless twinkling lights of ship and dwelling. In particular, the huge ferry-boats, all ablaze with electric light, look like illuminated pleasure barges snatched from some old-time Venetian carnival, as they glide in dazzling splendour from shore to shore or lie at rest throwing long bars of rich yellow hue across the deep dark waters. I have seen nocturnal revels and decorated craft in pageants on the Lake of Lucerne and the Grand Canal of Venice ; but for a surpassing effect of indigo and gold, and for lines of sparkling lights, I have seen nothing to equal the gorgeous panorama of Sydney Harbour that can be observed on any still moonless night.

“ The jewelled city glitters through the night ;
The jewelled boats glide softly through the gloom ;
On either hand dark isles and headlands loom,
And overhead stars flood the heavens with light.”

And of a truth, the poetess was in no mood of exaggeration when she composed her sonnet.

Sometimes, too, the many warships fling huge trails of glaring white light, as of comets falling to earth, across the dark blue sky ; and every time that darkness sets in, the evening star, of a magnitude and lustre that astonish our unaccustomed

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northern eyes, is reflected in a dainty pathway of silvery sheen upon the unruffled waters of the harbour.

In some of the more remote inlets, such as Lane Cove and Middle Harbour, and also in the long stretches westward towards Parramatta, the visitor will be better able to judge of the original appearance of this unique haven of the South during the early days of Australian settlement. It was in this last-named arm of the harbour, close to the little township of Ryde, that by chance I stumbled across one of the few country houses that won my admiration to the point of envy. The homestead in question stood near the landing-stage, above a rocky spit of land that was distinguished by some fragrant camphor laurels and by clumps of blossoming aloes. It was a plain villa, old-fashioned English in style, yet with suitable concessions to the sub-tropical climate of New South Wales, in its broad verandahs and its heavy wooden shutters. Built in the spacious days of pompous old Governor Macquarie, this little mansion had evidently fallen from its original state of Georgian gentility, for its palisaded garden had become a mere wilderness of weeds, interspersed with geraniums and ixias. But some ancient pear-trees making round masses of snowy blossom, a rampant Bougainvillea just bursting into garish purple glory, and a fine coral-tree with its tufts of vermilion flowers borne on naked boughs, all showed up boldly against a background of blue sky, affording a grand contrast in conflicting colours. A pair of piping crows in their trim parsonic plumage hopped hither and thither, uttering their musical cries. The whole place, despite its deserted air, presented a charming picture of an old-world English homestead in a fine Australian setting.

There was no inn visible in this quiet spot, so that I was glad to fall back, for the everlasting meal of tea and scones, upon a



tiny ramshackle cottage hard by, whose dilapidated porch bore a rustic board with the mystic but grateful word "Refreshments." A queer old couple inhabited this picturesque shanty, the husband an Englishman from the Midlands, who had emigrated to Australia thirty years previously, on the invitation of a grown-up son already settled here. The old fellow had not yet cast off the manners of the homeland, for to my surprise he addressed me as "sir," a form of salutation that Young Australia but rarely concedes. The house was interesting to me as exhibiting the typical home of a passing, or nearly passed, generation of settlers. The crazy, frame-built, shingle-roofed cottage stood in the middle of a large untidy garden, wherein fowls cackled and scratched amongst luxuriant clumps of arum lilies and gaudy cannas. Loquat and orange-trees that were loaded with fruit gave abundance of shade; whilst the only visible memento of the Old Country was to be seen in the climbing rose-bush covered with clusters of small pink blossoms.

Parramatta itself, which lies at the westernmost extremity of the harbour, is one of the few townships in Australia that can boast of genuine historical interest, for it still owns some few relics of its early prosperity and position as the first official seat of government in New South Wales. The quaint little early-Victorian "Macquarie Hall" with the date 1839 is still standing, and there also survive a few solid dwellings of past colonial days. The curious spired twin towers of old St John's Church, some of whose gravestones date back to the eighteenth century, also remain, although the body of the building has been lately converted into a painfully correct copy of a Romanesque edifice, with circular windows, dog's-tooth mouldings and all the rest of it. No doubt the modern eclectic architect was anxious to demolish the poor old towers as well,

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which so spoil the symmetry of his elegant new fabric, and I rather wondered how they came to be spared.

Close to the town are the former pleasure-grounds and official residence of the early Governors of New South Wales, now converted into a public park, which is bounded on one side by the brown sluggish waters of the Parramatta River. The steep grassy slopes are plentifully dotted with British oaks, whose bright green spring foliage seemed to relieve the gloomy impression made by the many dark pine-trees and sad-coloured eucalypts. On the crest of the bank stands a circular belvedere or summer-house, with stone arches and conical roof, beside which are fixed two small cannons with the date of 1810. Below this spot is the modest whitewashed mansion of Old Government House, of a size and type recalling many a Welsh or Irish old-fashioned country-seat, with its pillared porch and many low outbuildings. It is now a school, and is evidently well cared for, for its enclosed garden was full of simple English flowers, such as the old-time governors must have prized and tended. Piping crows were calling from the surrounding groves; the ubiquitous British sparrow chirruped noisily round the quiet precincts; and the whole scene wore a tranquil air as of official repose and the plain comfort of a bygone era.

During the recent agitation and public discussion anent the so-called "eviction" of the Federal Governor-General of Australia from Government House in Sydney, it was suggested by certain well-meaning persons that this ancient mansion should be restored to its former uses, and altered so as to contain the Governor-General and his suite on his occasional visits to the Mother State. But the idea is simply impossible of execution. Fancy a wealthy peer and peeress of to-day with their attendant horde of flunkys, grooms, secretaries, and *attachés*, with the whole parody of a colonial court, being

crowded into this modest palace at Parramatta, which sheltered Governors Bourke and Darling and Macquarie ! The very suggestion seems an insult to up-to-date British plutocracy and aloofness. In any case, I hope the authorities will leave the charming old house in peace and not tamper with its present aspect, that recalls so eloquently its century-old associations of historic grandees, whose names are still affectionately remembered in New South Wales. Amongst these fading memories I thought with a smile of the pleasant evening that James Backhouse, of the Society of Friends—inde-fatigable botanist, traveller and evangelist—spent here in the thirties in the society of Governor Bourke and his family party. At the close of a long discussion as to pauper lunatic asylums, wherein Mr Backhouse had laid down the law very decisively to his Excellency, tea was served, and after tea—oh, too shocking for words !—a card-table was set up, which circumstance gave the reverend visitor another opportunity to deliver a second homily to the polite assembly, this time on the evils of gambling.

“I stated the objections of the Society of Friends to the practice, on account of its dissipating effect on the mind, and its tendency to draw into an immoral risking of property. This elicited the remark that the present company only played for nominal stakes. The same objection lies, however, against playing for nominal stakes, as that which lies against what is called moderate drinking, in the use of intoxicating liquors. It gives a sanction to the practice, and opens the door for the greatest excesses.”

How relieved and delighted must Governor Bourke and his card-playing friends have been, when this “wowser” (as Backhouse would nowadays be dubbed in the pages of *The Sydney Bulletin*) finally took his departure !

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From an architectural or artistic point of view, Sydney cannot well be described as a fine city, in spite of its size, and in spite, too, of several individual buildings of imposing appearance and of handsome design. I very soon grew to realise the fact that, unlike Melbourne, which has had the inestimable advantage of being originally planned on a grandiose scale by far-sighted civic fathers, the city of Sydney has been allowed to grow anyhow and to spread anywhere. In fact, all the busiest and wealthiest thoroughfares that converge on Circular Quay were in the beginning formed by the casual tracks made by the hobnailed boots of Governor Phillip's first settlers. None of the early officials, indeed, seem to have dreamed that, owing to the magnificence of its site, Sydney was destined to develop in the course of a century into a new Liverpool of the Southern Seas. Consequently all the chief streets "down town" appear hopelessly cramped and crowded, for they merely occupy the spaces of the first impromptu township erected under Phillip and his immediate successors. To-day Sydney is paying heavily for this lamentable lack of foresight. The numerous fine solid buildings in these congested quarters show to small advantage; nor is there to be found a single thoroughfare that in stateliness of width and perspective can hold a candle to Collins Street in Melbourne. The early Governors of New South Wales, and Lachlan Macquarie in particular, not only failed to plan suitably for future generations and the civic needs of an immensely increased population; but they also exceeded the limits of common-sense by expending the scanty revenues of the young colony on public edifices which were as unsuitable to the needs of a small community a century ago, as they appear mean and inadequate to-day. Sydney Smith, in his biting criticism of the maladministration of what he quaintly terms "Botany

Bay" (for so he names the whole vast colony of New South Wales), lays special stress on Macquarie's megalomania in raising churches and public offices, whereas his first care should have been the repair of the convict gaols and the improvement of the rickety cottages of the labouring community over which he ruled. Nevertheless, ambitious old Macquarie has succeeded in his object of making Sydney bear the imprint of his activity in office, for even to-day on all sides one notes not a few buildings displaying his name, writ large in the clear type of the Regency period. In Queen's Square, at the southern end of Macquarie Street (the "Park Lane" of Sydney), still stands a group of buildings erected by him, and though nearly all of them will probably be swept away ere long under the plea of municipal improvement, one at least is pretty certain to be left intact. This is St James's Church, built of red brick with white pillared porticoes, and having a well-proportioned tower topped by a copper-sheathed spire. Above its eastern window appear the Governor's name and the date of its erection, 1820, so that it is not yet quite a centenarian, albeit it exhibits a markedly eighteenth-century type of architecture. I consider St James's Church by far the most interesting fragment of Old Sydney that survives to-day; whilst its handsome interior, despite the recent removal of square pews and sounding-board, strongly resembles a London church of the Georgian epoch, with its heavy gallery and its multitude of marble mural tablets. These latter contain many names that are familiar in Australian history, so that to the patriotic Australian citizen these epitaphs ought to possess a special degree of interest. Many memories of Old Sydney cling around this church, and not a few of these own a touch of the comical, as might only be expected owing to the incongruous elements whereof early colonial society was composed. One such anecdote I managed

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to unearth in a rare volume dealing with the social life during Governor Bourke's term of office, and so greatly was I amused thereat that I transcribe the story here. Originally New South Wales ranked merely as an archdeaconry under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishop of Calcutta, so that Archdeacon Scott, who was first appointed to this dignity by Earl Bathurst at home, was able to rule in this edifice with the full powers of a bishop, dean and chapter combined in himself as corporation sole. The Archdeacon, rightly or wrongly, became in course of time embroiled with one of the pew-renters of St James's, who is described as "a gentleman punctual in attendance with his six motherless daughters upon the services of the church, and of strict religious principles." This parishioner of importance objected strongly to the Archdeacon's attempt to oust himself and his family from his pew on the pretext of making certain structural alterations; with the result that the cleric's notice to quit was promptly met by a blank refusal to be so removed except under *force majeure*. Not a whit daunted, the Archdeacon now summoned the police officers to his aid, with orders to guard the pew in question.

"Unfortunately for the Archdeacon, the gentleman with whom he entered into this rash and unseemly squabble, was one of the most resolute men in the colony. He was infinitely better versed both in ecclesiastical and civil law, and even in divinity, than the arrogant Archdeacon himself. . . . He took his measures with imperturbable coolness, but with resolute and inflexible determination. For many successive Sundays, the sanctity of the church was violated, and the congregation was scandalised by the spectacle of police constables with their staves opposing the progress of a respectable

and religious father, with his numerous family of young females, to their accustomed place of worship."

No wonder the mixed congregation of old St James's, composed of officials, citizens and chained convicts in the gallery above, was shocked or tickled, as the case might be, with such Sunday exhibitions; especially when on one occasion this determined layman (to quote his own words) eluded the watchful constables "by leaping with the agility of a kangaroo" into the forbidden pew, and lifting one by one after him his six motherless daughters.

Finally, the Archdeacon, equally resolved to assert his authority, put an end to this unseemly brawling by causing the aforesaid pew to be boarded over and firmly fastened by screws. Not that the pother ended here, for the screwed-out widower with the six motherless daughters proceeded to appeal to the Bishop of Calcutta and also to initiate legal proceedings in the English courts, in order to obtain redress for this forcible seizure of his family pew. How the affair eventually transpired, I do not know; but it seems that Archdeacon Scott not long afterwards resigned his cure, with its salary of two thousand pounds a year, and returned home; whilst a little later the consecration of the beloved and well-remembered William Grant Broughton as first Anglican bishop in Australia at once restored peace to the agitated community.

It will hardly be credited that not so many years ago it was vigorously proposed to pull down this interesting church, together with the quaint contemporary Supreme Court adjoining, with its picturesque arcade, as well as to cut up a large portion of Hyde Park, the central park of Sydney, in order to erect a local railway station at this point. And this intended piece of vandalism was, I believe, only frustrated through the uncompromising opposition offered to the scheme by that

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Grand Old Man of Australia, the late Sir Henry Parkes, to whose action in this and in many other public matters Sydney owes to-day a prodigious debt of gratitude.

Never having been laid out on any definite plan, but built haphazard without regard to future development or building speculations, Sydney appears to-day a city of surprises and irregularities. There are, in fact, three distinct Sydneys of various epochs: the Sydney of the early Governors, with its plain brick buildings and gabled cottages; the Sydney of Victorian days, with its plaster-fronted houses and its bastard Tuscan architecture, recalling the streets of Pimlico and Bayswater; and last, the New Sydney of post-Federation date, with its sky-scrapers, its many important new public buildings and its rows of modern houses and cottages. Of Old Sydney, with its memories dating back in some cases to Governor Phillip's days, over a century ago, numerous relics still survive, though almost all are doomed to disappear ere long in the present wave of advancing prosperity. In many of the side-streets of the central quarters of the town, and also in the older suburbs, such as Darlinghurst, Woolahra, Paddington and Campbelltown, are to be seen numberless examples of the little old-fashioned houses, mostly built on an English model, with the verandahs and jalousies. Old Sydney naturally enshrines many recollections that appeal to the Australian citizen of an inquiring or historical cast of mind; but these early colonial buildings present little attraction to the casual visitor, who is almost invariably quite ignorant of the traditions and annals of New South Wales. To the best of my knowledge, the oldest dated building of any size is the very unobtrusive naval barracks close to Circular Quay, a long, low, unpretending erection that bears the date of 1812 and of course the ubiquitous

name of Macquarie. Besides this, there is a group of buildings near Hyde Park, already alluded to, which contains St James's Church, the Supreme Court, the former military barracks, the State Mint, and the old-world Oxford Hotel, which taken in the mass vividly recall some quaint corner of Soho or Islington.

Then there are the many mid-Victorian houses, some of them built by persons of wealth and taste, that are still very numerous in the neighbourhood of Pott's Point. These former homes of colonial merchant princes have nowadays mostly fallen from their high estate and been converted into boarding-houses, schools or hospitals, and their shady gardens cut up for building sites; still a good few of them remain intact with their surrounding pleasaunces. Indeed, every visitor to Sydney ought to wander round the headlands of Pott's Point and Darling Point to view these delightful Australian villas, of which one reads such glowing accounts in the novels of "Rolf Boldrewood," and to note the beauty of their gardens sloping to the foreshore and affording exquisite peeps of the distant North Head.

Of the many large modern buildings, the sky-scrapers that have sprung up during the last decade are painfully obtrusive in all views of the city; and, indeed, these frankly utilitarian structures have dwarfed or hidden all the towers and spires that once lent the impression of a picturesque city to Sydney in the past. Of the churches, the Roman Catholic and Anglican cathedrals are highly ornate, but distinctly commonplace. The former (St Mary's) occupies the best position in Sydney, standing as it does on the crest of the slope between Hyde Park and the valley of Woolloomooloo,¹ and is now, after the

¹ The name of Woolloomooloo (accented on the first and last syllables) has often been mistaken for a true native name. But I am told it was only the attempt of the local aborigines to describe the windmill that was set up here above the cove in early days.

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sky-scrapers, the most prominent architectural feature of the city when viewed from the harbour. On the other hand, the Anglican cathedral of St Andrew, a sort of caricature of York Minster, seems almost lost amid the many lofty buildings of George Street down town ; whilst its proximity to the Town Hall, designed in the most flamboyant style of the French Renaissance, completely destroys the effect of its pinnacled towers and buttresses. Next to the Town Hall rises the Victoria Market, a huge erection in a nondescript style that defies any architectural classification ; that cost a fortune to build, and is now voted as useless as it is ugly. The spectacle of these three incongruous public edifices standing in line affords a good object-lesson, if ever there was one, of how not to beautify a large city. To counterbalance this adverse criticism, it is only fair to add that there is an abundance of really well-proportioned and handsome civic palaces in other parts of Sydney, and of these the New Art Gallery, imposing without and admirably planned within, and the fine gothic mass of the University are especially worthy of praise.

Of these modern buildings the one in which I took an especial interest was the newly founded Mitchell Library, of which Sydney has great reason to be proud. The building itself, of light brown freestone, is in the Palladian style, and it is destined eventually to become a wing of an enormous Public Library that will be erected here some time in the future. The story of the foundation of the Mitchell Library is an interesting one. The late Mr James Mitchell, a wealthy resident of Sydney who lived in one of the old-fashioned dwellings of Darlinghurst, was an ardent bibliophile and collector. Dying childless, he bequeathed his fine private library to form the nucleus of a national library dealing chiefly with Australian history, exploration and topography ; whilst in addition to this gift of

books and manuscripts, he donated the sum of seventy thousand pounds or thereabouts for the upkeep of his proposed institution, on condition that the Government of the State of New South Wales should erect the actual building required for housing his collection. This condition was duly carried out, so that the income of the trust fund remains free for the upkeep of the library and the payment of the members of the staff, who number about a dozen. The Mitchell Library contains a fair number of *incunabula* and rare books of early date; but its chief glory is the fact that it is essentially an Australasian collection, to which new works on Australian subjects are continually being added, thanks to the endowment fund. The Mitchell Library, therefore, stands unique in the Southern hemisphere as a literary temple of learning and research for the increasing race of Australasian historians and writers. Numerous manuscripts, books, registers and even paintings and engravings have been already bought by the trustees, or else have been presented to the library by patriotic Australian citizens, who are beginning to recognise the Mitchell Library as the chief fountain-head of all information concerning their continent and its surrounding islands. For the scope of the library is by no means confined to things Australian, seeing that it also collects and absorbs all works dealing with Tasmania, New Zealand, the South Sea Islands, Papua and even the Dutch East Indies. Here are to be found and consulted all known works, in many languages, dealing with the early voyages of Tasman, Don Quiros, Dampier, de Bougainville, Cook and the other great navigators of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; here, too, are preserved many records of the early penal days of settlement; here are accounts of the inland exploring expeditions under Flinders, Burke, Hume, Leichardt, Bass and other pioneers.

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The library is already a veritable gold-mine of information for the Australasian historian and student, for whose every demand and inquiry there exists a ready supply. Many pleasant hours I spent within the walls of the Mitchell Library, and I carry with me the most agreeable recollections of its interesting contents, as also of the courteous assistance given to me by its chief librarian and the members of the staff.

If one cannot praise all the public buildings of Sydney conscientiously, there can be nothing but unqualified admiration for the many municipal parks and gardens, both in the heart of the city and in the outskirts. Of the outlying open spaces, Moore and Centennial Parks alone cover about a thousand acres, wherein there is ample room for the youth of Sydney to play football, cricket, tennis, lacrosse and other games, as well as for older persons to walk and enjoy the distant views of Botany Bay from these breezy heights. In the town itself, Hyde Park, of some sixty acres in extent, open to the street and unenclosed, is most attractive, with its grassy lawns and gay flower-beds, its groups of palms and avenues of shady Moreton Bay fig-trees. This tree, sometimes called the native fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*), is to my mind rather a dull, dingy tree, with its broad dark leathery leaves, whose under sides are of a rusty brown tint, and with numbers of useless fruits that resemble a small purple fig. Discovered first on the shores of Moreton Bay in Queensland, this stately but rather dismal tree is widely grown throughout all Australian parks on account of its thick shade, in a land whose native trees are mostly remarkable for their absence of umbrageous foliage.

Crossing Queen's Square, at the northern end of Hyde Park, which is adorned by statues of the late Queen-Empress and her Consort, that look towards Governor Macquarie's almost venerable church, one next enters the Domain, another noble



Off the Australian Coast

stretch of turf, well studded with British oaks and Australian fig-trees, the two species that were held especially in favour with the early Governors, the first for its sentimental associations with the Old Country and the latter for its grateful shade.

But the pearl of all Sydney open spaces is the world-renowned Botanical Gardens, lying between the Domain and the harbour, which here forms Farm Cove, a small curved bay whereat good Governor Phillip first started farming operations in the new continent, with the small stock of domestic animals and the seeds that had survived the long voyage hither from the English shores. It seems only fitting, therefore, that the top-most lawn of these pleasant gardens should be distinguished by the unselfish Governor's effigy in bronze, and in this conspicuous spot he stands aloft in shine and shower on a pedestal that is supported by a bevy of allegorical figures and fishes ; and thence he ever gazes eastwards over the waters of the harbour that his keels were the first to displace. During my many visits to Sydney I found these gardens a never-failing source of interest and instruction, and here it was that I made my first acquaintance with many of the floral wonders of the Australian soil. It was here, too, that I first stepped on buffalo-grass, a thick-bladed native grass that retains its succulence despite the intense dry heat ; whilst when mowed and tended, its coarse springy blades give the impression of treading on a thick-piled carpet.

What struck me most forcibly on my first visit to this popular pleasaunce was the marvellous adaptability of the local soil to the growth of plants from the most distant quarters of the globe. In these gardens flourish plants, trees and flowers from tropical, sub-tropical and temperate zones, which appear to thrive in equal profusion ; and in fact it quite startled me

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to observe a number of English primroses blossoming freely beneath the shade of coco-palms, and glowing beds of pansies or larkspurs flourishing beside hedges of flaming crimson hibiscus. The native plants of Africa in particular seem to enjoy their Australian transportation, and many were the floral wonders to which I was introduced. To mention one instance only, it was here that I first realised the extreme splendour of the Sacred Thorn (*Euphorbia splendens*), a denizen of Madagascar, for here were long borders formed of this twisting gorgeous thorn all ablaze with masses of the lovely cardinal-red blossoms, that bloom so sparsely in our hot-houses at home. Both to the botanist with an eye to acquiring practical knowledge, as well as to the mere lover of Nature, these gardens appeal with equal force; whilst to the newly arrived stranger, the long borders that are specially reserved for specimens of the wild flora of New South Wales will prove of peculiar value, before he proceeds to explore the waste lands that still exist in the neighbourhood of Sydney. There are, doubtless, other Botanic Gardens elsewhere in the world better kept and better planned than these; but in my opinion none can possibly surpass those of Sydney in their natural luxuriance of growth and in their lovely position on the slopes descending to the sunlit waters of Port Jackson.

Adjoining the Botanic Gardens and occupying most of the long narrow rocky peninsula between Farm Cove and Circular Quay, are the grounds of Federal Government House, formerly the residence of the Governors of New South Wales prior to Federation in 1900. The fate of this palace and its private park formed recently a subject of bitter controversy between the Liberal and advanced Labour Parties of the State during the first few months after my arrival in Australia. The dispute raged over the question as to whether this official residence

should be retained intact as a home for the Governor-General of Australia on his occasional visits to Sydney ; or whether both the house and its grounds should be " resumed " by the State. Eventually it was decided to throw open the park and gardens to the public, but to leave the building for the present ; and the formal handing over of the once sacred demesne of former State Governors took place in December 1912, in the presence of a large concourse of citizens, whose feelings as to this stroke of policy were evidently by no means unanimous. I myself was present on this occasion, and afterwards, in common with many other persons, used to roam through the grounds that had for so long been jealously guarded from the invasion of the unauthorised public. I thought the park itself in a shocking state of neglect and sadly needing the care that is now being bestowed upon it. The flower garden in front of the palace was pretty, and sloped pleasantly towards the harbour ; but the actual mansion is a clumsy, bastard gothic pile of buildings, in the so-called " baronial " style that was admired in the days of Smirke and Barry. What will be the ultimate fate of Sydney Government House, it is hard to tell. Perhaps the State Governor of New South Wales, who since the year 1900 has been housed at Cranbrook, a large villa in the suburban district of Double Bay, will once more be expected to occupy the former official seat of his predecessors in office, although the size of the older building will prevent anyone, save a rich man, from wishing to inhabit so expensive a palace on so modest a salary.

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One of the most interesting of the many excursions to be made around Sydney is the visit to Botany Bay, with its ill-omened name and its earlier and pleasanter memories of Captain Cook and Governor Phillip, who followed the famous navigator

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some eighteen years later with his flotilla and its complement of sailors, settlers and convicts. The town of Botany is now become practically a suburb of Sydney, and is a dusty unattractive place, full of bone and glue factories, which fill the hot air with nasty smells. The famous Bay itself is the very antithesis of Port Jackson, for it is almost circular in form, has no great depth and is about six square miles in extent. Its shallow waters and its exposed aspect soon made Phillip realise the inadvisability of founding a permanent settlement on these low sandy shores, in spite of the advice tendered both by Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks. To the west appears the suburban town of Kogarah, but the southern side of the Bay, with its long stretches of shining sands and its lines of dark gum-forest, must appear to-day very much as it did what time the *Endeavour* sailed in 1770 between the two outlying horns of the Bay. The actual site of Cook's first landing was at Kurnell on the southern promontory, where in a picturesque overhanging cliff, that is often spattered by the surf of the angry waves, can be seen a small brass tablet to commemorate this the opening event in the history of White Australia. Kurnell is a "reserve," or wild park, full of untouched natural beauties and with a Government "rest-house," or inn; nevertheless, this interesting spot is not much visited by the people of Sydney, in spite of its historical associations and its attractive surroundings; and on the afternoon that I crossed the Bay to Kurnell none were there save two or three fishermen who were catching black-fish off the rocks. Less interesting than the little tablet already mentioned, was the tall stone obelisk that was set up in 1870 to commemorate the centenary of Cook's landing, beside which grow two tall Norfolk Island pine-trees, planted here by the present King and his elder brother, Prince Albert Victor, when as midshipmen on

Neap Parramatta





board the *Bacchante* they visited Australia in their youth.

Returning by the electric launch that plies daily across the mouth of Botany Bay, I stepped ashore at the rocky headland of La Pérouse, where I duly paid my respects to the stone column erected in 1828 in honour of that unfortunate French naval commander, whose ship, the *Astrolabe*, arrived on these coasts just too late to anticipate Governor Phillip's formal act of annexation of the (as yet) wholly unexplored continent. The tall pillar, surmounted by the model of an astrolabe, stands at the extreme point of the cape, opposite Bare Island, and its plinth is covered with brass tablets added by various French naval officers who have subsequently visited Sydney. Within a stone's-throw of this monument lies a modest grave, enclosed by railings and marked by a tall iron cross, which denotes the last resting-place of Père Le Recevreur, a Franciscan friar and chaplain on board the *Astrolabe*, who died suddenly on the shores of Botany Bay in 1788, and was consequently the first Christian minister of religion to receive burial in Australian soil.

Close to these relics of French enterprise and failure opens a tiny valley, shaded by a few gum-trees and some gnarled old Banksias, which has of recent years been enclosed to form a settlement for the few aboriginals who still exist in the neighbourhood of Sydney. The total number enrolled of this small community is said to amount to ninety persons, men, women and children, but of these only a mere fraction is of pure-blooded descent. The settlement is bounded by a palisade and contains perhaps a couple of dozen of neat frame cottages, painted a dark red colour and in some cases surrounded by little patches of garden. The mission which controls this native reserve is undenominational in its character, and its chapel is

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little more than a large room with some discarded tram-benches for seats and with some coloured texts and Biblical pictures on its walls. A sharp eye is always kept by the Superintendent so as to exclude all beer and spirits from this diminutive city of refuge ; for in spite of strict laws there still exists persons vile enough to sell the fatal liquor that is one of the particular curses brought by civilisation to these poor savages. The men mostly go fishing down the coast ; the women perform domestic work at home and also make ornaments out of the gaily-coloured shells of the beach, which are bought by the many visitors from Sydney that are often attracted hither on a holiday afternoon. The children, who are educated by the members of the mission, are all half-caste, and so fair are some of them that they can scarcely be distinguished from Jewish or Italian children of a similar age. There is one stout and imposing middle-aged "gin," a daughter of that bygone celebrity "King Billy," who always claimed to be chief of the dwindling tribe that still haunted the environs of Sydney a couple of generations ago. I also saw an ancient crone, walking on crutches, who was as black as ebony, and possessed a splendid mop of snow-white hair. On the day of my visit an eleven of the settlement was engaged in playing a cricket match against a team of youths from Sydney, who, so far as I could judge, were being easily vanquished by their aboriginal opponents. The barefooted native cricketers played the game with zest but without much science, slogging hotly at every ball bowled and trusting solely to their marvellous accuracy of eye, which enabled them to make some very respectable hits. An elderly black-fellow gave a performance for my special edification with the boomerang (the light curved club of the Australian savage), which he made to twist and turn, to fly high and low, in a wonderfully dexterous manner, considering the cramped and

inconvenient space he had at his disposal for his exhibition of this unique form of native skill. The soft voices and gentle manners of these poor folk were very engaging ; and it was some comfort to think that kind, practical persons were doing in this place all that was possible on behalf of these dusky grown-up children of Australia with their young families.

III

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF SYDNEY

I HAD often read in books, and had also been "credibly informed," that I should find a new race of Britons in Australia who were almost completely transformed in ideas and character by some generations of a sub-tropical climate and novel surroundings. It speaks a whole volume for the dogged, sturdy British temperament, that it has contrived after all these years to triumph over so many obstacles of climate, of soil and of geographical isolation ; and that the average Australian of to-day, in spite of all austral temptations, still remains in his new home oversea an Englishman, a Scotchman, a Welshman or an Irishman, as the case may be. *Cælum non animum mutârunt.* I had also been informed that the people of Sydney in a special degree approached more nearly to the present-day type of the inhabitants of Southern Europe than those of the British Isles. I was therefore on my arrival in Sydney not a little surprised to observe that its citizens were very nearly, if not wholly, as British in outward aspect, deportment and manner of living as the dwellers of other Australian towns that I chanced to visit. I could perceive no significant sign of the many marks of difference I had been led to expect ; indeed, the average crowd in Pitt Street or Macquarie Street could scarcely, if at all, be differentiated from the usual crowd in a London thoroughfare. Take a large slice of suburban London itself, just as it stands with its buildings and its residents, and then drop the whole of it at haphazard upon the sunny shores

of Port Jackson, and straightway you create a Sydney. Certain points of disagreement between the two must of necessity exist, but such notes of variation are really trifling beside the fixed impression of close similarity. It is indeed this remarkable identity of mother and daughter races that helped to make me realise the essential dissimilarity that exists between Australia and the United States of America, which latter country I more than half expected Australia to resemble. For during a visit I paid some few years ago in the United States I invariably felt myself to be an alien, speaking the language of its inhabitants fluently no doubt, but none the less for that a mere sojourner in a foreign land. But with regard to Australia and my early impressions of its people, so far as the human or social side of existence was concerned, I might seemingly have only moved into another county of my native land, and not have travelled some twelve thousand miles across the sea to enter a great self-governing Dominion. Indeed, to an Englishman, and especially to a Londoner, a far more substantial change from the social point of view would be gained from a visit to Scotland or Cornwall than in migrating to distant New South Wales.

I admit readily, however, that there are some superficial points of difference in manners, speech and dress between the two peoples. Roughly speaking, the men are tall, thin and sunburnt; the women short, plump and rather pallid; but there are exceptions in plenty to modify so broad a statement as this. There is a conspicuous absence of the fresh-coloured complexions that our hard grey weather produces at home in such abundance; and, in particular, the children, or "kiddies" as they are almost invariably termed, look pale and freckled, though they all seem in excellent health. It is a relief, too, to discover that the wretched, half-starved figure in rags, whether

man, woman or child, that forms so common and so sad a feature in all our great cities at home, has no place in the streets of Sydney, where everybody seems well clothed and well nourished. One cannot resist the pleasing thought that the general health of the community is here the constant care of the State, so noticeable is the absence of flaunting poverty and of foul disease. To mention one circumstance alone out of many, I was much struck by the complete absence in Sydney of sore or injured eyes, although the climate with its severe glare and perpetual dust must be very trying to the eyesight. Never have I seen so great a contrast in this respect as there is between Sydney and Naples, which cities, in point of population, climate and natural setting, own so much in common.

A slight note of variety in dress was the popularity of the soft felt hat that is almost invariably affected by the men-folk, to the welcome exclusion of the vulgar cloth cap and the ugly billycock, which are all-too-familiar on British heads. The slow nasal intonation and the cockney twang, which we at home so often associate with our Australian visitors, are certainly prevalent, but they are not very pronounced; whilst the naturally soft British voices are still happily kept free from the loud aggressive tone that is so trying to the stranger in the United States. I did not notice many peculiar idioms in ordinary use, at least in the speech of the people. The expression "That's right!" constantly used when a plain "Yes" would suffice, struck me as a novelty of language; whilst the frequent habit in shops of using the silly word "Ta!" instead of "Thank you," to the customer, I found strange and also a trifle irritating. Of course there does exist a goodly store of terms and expressions that are racy of the Australian soil, with which the tourist will become acquainted in due course, though he is more likely to come across them in print than in con-

versation. If he is anxious to acquire such oddities of expression quickly, he has only to peruse the columns of *The Sydney Bulletin*, wherein he will find ample material both for learning and guessing in this connection.

Also, alas ! despite the prodigious difference in climate, the time-honoured diet of the Old Country still regulates the staple meals of the Australian people throughout the whole of the island-continent. Joints of tough beef and mutton, water-logged potatoes and cabbage, fruit tarts smothered under heavy pastry, hot milk-puddings—they all predominate out here, and there is no escape from the heaviness and unsuitability thereof. Beer and whisky are the favourite stimulants ; and of course in a nation of tea-drinkers, many of whom enjoy this beverage half-a-dozen times a day, the tea-pot continues the most faithfully cherished of the British Lares and Penates that the early settlers bore with them from their old home to the far-off land of promise. The wines of Australia, though their appreciation is yearly growing, are still not nearly so popular as they deserve to be. Personally, I never want to drink better wines than those produced by the *vignerons* of New South Wales and South Australia, their hock in particular being fully as delicate to the palate as many of the vintages of the Rhineland. The red wines I did not consider equal to the white, though many of the clarets produced are distinctly good ; a decent glass of Australian port, however, is a boon that has not yet been given to the public. Setting aside the native wines, the Australian *cuisine* remains aggravatingly, defiantly British, and still sadly lacks the variety and the improved preparation that one finds in the dishes served in the United States. Many of the appetising vegetables such as are commonly encountered on every American table are practically unknown out here ; and though one occasionally in

hotels meets with sweet-potatoes or sweet-corn, the list is commonly limited to the potato, the cauliflower, the onion, the cabbage and the mawkish pumpkin. Is the taste of the native-born Australian so deeply conservative, I wonder, that he dislikes or despises any vegetables save those known to his forefathers in the Old Country ? Even tomatoes are not very often sent to table, except in the tiresome form of an ingredient of the salad-bowl. When I reflect on the many delicious vegetables of Italy and the United States, all of which could be grown with the greatest ease in this prolific soil, I really marvel at such a want of taste, or want of enterprise, on the part of the Britons of Australia. The globe artichoke, for example, seems practically unknown as a table vegetable, and the asparagus I met with was almost invariably tinned or bottled. Even when Chinese or Japanese cooks are kept (as is usually the case in the country hotels), the antiquated methods of insipid British cookery are strictly insisted on. Until he has spent some weeks in travelling about Australia, the reader will never realise the odious monotony of the meals, with their thin soup, tough meat, soggy potatoes and stodgy puddings, which are served invariably in almost every hotel. And yet, somehow, in spite of distaste and indigestion, I could not but admire the intensely conservative spirit of racial superiority that thus in its daily diet positively defies the heat of a more or less tropical climate, and spite of all still clings to the tough roast beef of Old England and its attendant pies and puddings. And talking of pies, I remember hearing the raucous cry of " Hot pies ! " (which is characteristic of every Australian town at nightfall) being shouted along the streets on a sultry night in one of the tropical towns of Queensland ; and despite the temperature, I daresay there were persons to be found in plenty who bought and ate and relished these burning hot delicacies.

Talking of food, I may add that fruit in Sydney is both high in price and indifferent in quality, although I suppose there exists no better spot in the world for fruit-farming than certain districts of New South Wales, where the cheap fruit season ought to continue without a break from 1st January to 31st December of every year. Yet during the season it is almost impossible to buy a good eating apple or orange under twopence; whilst as to the peaches, concerning which in my boyhood I used to hear such tales as made my mouth water, they were mostly flaccid and of poor flavour, a fact which need not arouse wonder, since it appears the fruit on the trees is chiefly picked unripe, and simply exposed for sale when it has become sufficiently soft. If one wants really good fruit in Sydney—well, one has simply to pay Bond Street prices for it, for most of the stuff one sees so tastefully arranged in the shop windows is in reality only fit for stewing. Bananas are as dear as, and not a whit better than, they are in London; the best bananas being the imported fruit from the Fiji Islands, on which a heavy tariff is levied. The Queensland bananas, in spite of their State being nicknamed “Banana-land,” are very inferior in quality; as an Australian once expressed it pithily to me: “We have good and bad bananas out here. If you strike a good one, you may be sure it came from Fiji; and if bad, that it was grown in Queensland.” In Sydney and everywhere north of that city, I very rarely came across a dish of decent fruit on the table of any hotel or boarding-house that I visited. Usually the dessert-dish contains small hard apples, unripe bananas, inferior oranges and a few sour granadillas or passion-fruits; indeed, the average eighteen-penny meal in any small London restaurant will supply a better and more varied dessert than the Australian hotels. Occasionally, and presumably as a great treat, a few slices of coarse, acid pine-

apple are served in addition, or maybe a rock-melon or a paw-paw. What becomes of the tropical and sub-tropical fruits that are grown in such quantities, and whose excellence is constantly being dinned abroad in the many local guide-books, I often wonder. Even as a mere advertisement of their prowess in this line of cultivation, it might perhaps pay the authorities of Queensland and New South Wales to give a stranger travelling in their midst an opportunity of tasting their vaunted fruits at the hotel table, for one cannot well buy a custard-apple, a melon or a paw-paw and eat it in the street (though, I confess, I have once or twice been guilty of such conduct on the sly).

It is much the same story with the fish ; whatever is served at table has only been taken off the ice whereon it has been reposing maybe for weeks. And this in a city whose surrounding waters teem with excellent fish, such as the gar-fish, the schnapper, the bream, the black-fish, the whiting, the mullet, and others whose names I have either forgotten or perhaps have never heard. Nor is there any other market for the local fish, save Sydney or Melbourne ; yet the municipal authorities in Sydney permit a ring of Dago, or South European, fish-mongers to cheat the citizens with high prices and stale fish. And thus the low-class Italian greengrocers, who seem to have the monopoly of the fruit trade, and the Greeks who control the fish and oyster supply, batten on the residents. Of course it is a crying shame and scandal, as well as a source of everlasting complaint from the victims ; yet this injustice to the consumer seems likely to continue indefinitely, and the profits of Dago merchants and speculators to increase yearly, for the cost of everything that is worth eating has been rising steadily in Sydney, which has now gained the unenviable distinction of being the most expensive to inhabit of all the large Australian

towns. Rent is very high ; wages are exorbitant ; the State Government is extravagant, and unduly liberal with the public revenue towards any scheme that may chance to catch votes ; so that, as a result, the unfortunate householder of small or moderate means finds it increasingly difficult to cope with a standard of living that in the year 1911 was pushed up to the extent of fifteen per cent. on that of the previous year.

Most visitors who intend to remain any considerable time in Sydney, usually repair to one of the many boarding-houses that abound in the upper portions of the town, and especially in the suburb of Darlinghurst. They are well-advised to do so, for the large hotels are dear and indifferent, nor are they particularly comfortable to inhabit. The manners of Sydney are proverbially bad, but I think it is in the hotels that this disagreeable trait is most noticeable. I have occasionally spent a few days in one of the largest of the hotels, and on each occasion I have been amazed at the open indifference displayed for the comfort and convenience of the guests. As a first experience of a new country, a preliminary visit to the average Sydney hotel is not a little discouraging. The bedroom service is very poor ; no messages are given at the bureau ; no letters are forwarded ; answers that are curt to rudeness are usually the sole result of any inquiry ; and, in short, you are made to feel acutely in a variety of ways that your presence is quite unnecessary to the proprietors, who don't care a farthing whether you stay or leave. It was in one of these hotels that on my first arrival I saw a framed notice in my bedroom, bidding its occupant take *all* his or her valuables to the bathroom ; otherwise, so I gathered from this highly discomposing warning, the owners ran no small risk of never setting eyes on their cherished possessions again. This proclamation of course had its ludicrous side, and its terms were recently quoted in

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Punch, accompanied by a fancy-portrait of "a gentleman going to his bath in a Sydney hotel," the individual in question being depicted in his dressing-gown and as struggling with the usual bath accessories, together with a heterogeneous mass of his valuables, which included his watch and chain, cigar-case, dressing-bag, golf-sticks and other personal effects on which he set special store. Personally, I never lost any article in a Sydney hotel, but I was told that such a general warning was by no means unjustified ; and certainly I did suffer more than once from the disagreeable practice of "nicking," by which articles are taken, and instead of being restored to their rightful owner or to the responsible people of his hotel, are retained by the finder until a reward is advertised in the papers. By the way, to anyone travelling in the country districts, I tender him the advice, founded on personal experience, that he cannot be too careful in the disposal of his valuables, for robberies in the hotels of the country towns (where the broad verandahs and tall windows opening out on to them offer singularly happy chances to the thief) are very common, especially on the crowded occasions of race-meetings or local carnivals.

All the chief hotels of Sydney are "down town," in hot, noisy and dusty situations ; and, strangely enough, there is no large residential hotel with a garden on any one of the many beautiful sites, in pure air, overlooking the harbour. Several of the *pensions*, on the other hand, own gardens and views. The terms of the better class of boarding-house vary from two to three and a half guineas a week ; the food is pretty good, and the service usually superior to that of the hotels. There is, of course, no hotel or restaurant in Sydney that would be pronounced as really first-class, according to European or American standards. The casual, not to say rude manners of the

servants, the presence of the many stragglers from the adjacent bar (which is always the leading feature of any prosperous Australian hotel), and the general inferiority of the appointments and decorations offer a strong contrast with the luxurious surroundings and well-organised attendance of hotels in other lands. Whether such a venture as a Ritz or a Carlton would prove a financial success in Sydney, is extremely doubtful; but a real first-class hotel, run on European lines by a capable Swiss manager and with a well-disciplined staff, would necessarily prove an agreeable novelty and a source of wonder to many in the wealthy capital of New South Wales.

Speaking of hotels and boarding-houses, I was astonished at the conspicuous absence of what I may call the household life in Sydney, where an unusually large proportion of the well-to-do no longer live in homes of their own, but prefer to inhabit temporary or permanent quarters in the various hotels or *pensions*. The chief reason of this social attitude is not far to seek; it is the universal lack of competent domestic service, which renders housekeeping a trial, and even a torture of which the Englishwoman who has never visited Australia can have no conception. It is not so much the high wages demanded as the gross incompetence and the appalling insolence of the average female domestic—men-servants are almost unknown outside the larger hotels—which has compelled so many persons to shut up or sell their houses and to fly for refuge to some residential hotel. There are capable and civil servant-girls to be found in these large establishments, but the class of maid that seeks employment in the private houses, especially the type of maid-of-all-work, is a real source of terror to the unhappy householder who expects to obtain politeness, industry, or consideration in return for the high wages and good

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accommodation and abundant leisure that are demanded by these harpies. Years ago there appeared in *Punch* some amusing caricatures entitled "Servantgalism ; or, What is to becomes of the Missuses ? " and the humorist would find an ample field for his satirical pencil in present-day Sydney. So far as the actual question is concerned, it has already been solved in this city by the precipitate flight of the discomfited Missuses to the haven of the boarding-house, where others will control and placate the rampant domestic "slavery." Many amusing yet authentic tales are repeated anent the servant difficulty, of which I shall only include one here. So little is the old-fashioned tradition of domestic service understood by the Australian servant of to-day, that on one occasion a new maid, on being told by her mistress to address her as "Mum," replied : "Oh, dear no, Mrs Smith, I could never call you *that*, for that's what I always call my own mother ; but I'll call you Auntie, if you like" !

I used to read often in the Australian papers of domestic servants coming out from England as immigrants, but the real fact seems to be that the persons so described were not really qualified servants at all, but merely work-girls who found it convenient to register themselves as such, in order to obtain better rates of passage. In any case, the competent and civil domestic servant is not only rare already, but in Sydney will soon become as extinct as the dodo or the moa. To the average householder, therefore, the only course has been to buckle to and perform the whole of the menial service single-handed, with occasional paid help from outside, or else to retire to some hotel. In the latter event, of course, the home ceases to exist, so that to a far greater extent probably than in any other large city, private gatherings and entertainments are confined to restaurants or cafés : a state of things that necessarily intro-



A North Sydney Home



Throwing the Boomerang

duces a marked element of restlessness into the whole social life of Sydney.

With the city spreading rapidly in all directions, the question of civic improvements is growing very serious and acute. Sydney Proper is shaped like a long-necked bottle, with all the suburban roads converging in the same direction towards Circular Quay, which is also the goal of all the harbour passenger traffic from the North Shore suburbs. At present the pushing, and bustling, and general display of bad and selfish manners of the populace during the morning and evening hours of going and returning to and from the city are quite a revelation to the stranger, after the orderly methods and manners of all other big towns.

In addition to the tram-lines, which, except during the business hours of come-and-go, are convenient and cheap enough, there are hansoms still in evidence, in spite of the recent invasion of the taxi-cab, which must ultimately oust this antiquated Victorian conveyance. The Sydney hansom-cab is an odious contrivance, tilted low towards the ground; luggage is never placed on the top (as was formerly the case in London), but is heaped up between the door and the splash-board, so that the occupant of the vehicle sits a helpless prisoner during his ride and cannot emerge until some friendly outsider has first removed his trunks for him. Cab fares are far dearer than at home, though not so exorbitant as in America; but the latter deficiency is made up by the very high charges of the carriers. On one occasion I had to pay four shillings for three small pieces of hand-luggage that were conveyed from Circular Quay to my hotel, to say nothing of the shilling most ungraciously accepted by a casual loafer, who pretended to assist in lifting these packages into the carrier's cart.

The daily papers in Sydney are edited wholly in the British manner, and therefore present a thorough and blessed contrast with the press of American towns, with their sensational headlines, their society scandals, and their blood-thirsty horrors. The leading paper is *The Sydney Morning Herald*, which is well filled with accurate news of the doings in all parts of the globe. Though it is sometimes voted rather grandmotherly by a large section of the rising generation, its tone is wholesome and reasonable throughout, and it occupies somewhat the position held by our *Morning Post* at home. Its political views are, of course, decidedly Liberal, as opposed to Labour; but I noticed that its sympathies were most openly given to the Home Rule Party and the present Radical Cabinet at home, though British political questions are usually criticised with some reserve. Perhaps the weekly letter by Sir Henry Lucy from London that is inserted in its pages, and treats of our home affairs from a frankly Radical point of view, causes the *Herald's* present attitude in this respect. *The Daily Telegraph*, also Liberal in its political views but more inclined to voice the Roman Catholic standpoint, is rather more vivacious than the *Herald*, and has almost as wide a circulation. But all persons who intend to remain any length of time in Australia, and wish to understand the democratic trend of Australian ideas, should not fail to read *The Sydney Bulletin*, a large sixpenny budget of the most varied contents, in a bright pink cover, that is published weekly and has an extensive circulation throughout all parts of Australia, for it is to be found equally in the cities, in the remote western townships and in the northern mining-camps; and wherever a copy of the *Bulletin* is seen, one may feel sure it has been well read from cover to cover. In one of its many aspects, the *Bulletin* fills the place of our own *Punch*, for it always includes at least one

full-page political cartoon, as well as other political or semi-political sketches, in addition to a number of illustrated jokes. It is an independent paper, though far more favourable to the Labour than the Liberal cause ; for it can hardly be classed as a Labour journal, seeing how often it plays the part of very candid friend to that party. But the *Bulletin* is also the chief literary and dramatic paper in Australia, and its so-called "red page" always presents a vigorous and able review of some recent work of importance, besides a number of minor criticisms of current literature. The prevailing tone and a good deal of the language employed will probably on first acquaintance produce no slight mental shock to the average travelling Briton, who has hitherto been unacquainted with the *Bulletin's* peculiar style and aims ; but if anyone really wishes to study Australian life and aspirations through genuine Australian spectacles, I most strongly advise such an one to pocket his insular prejudice for the nonce and to peruse this periodical every week. Not that the *Bulletin* can by any means be said to represent truly the better and sounder opinion of the community, though it certainly does reflect the advanced desires and ideals of a considerable section of the Australian people. The paper is often irreverent, and still more often is it disloyal in its utterances, though with a light flippancy that rather disarms lasting annoyance. Yet its caustic comments upon whole classes of society or upon old and venerated institutions, though often witty enough, are frequently as unfair as they are sweeping. Nevertheless, in spite of momentary disgust, he must indeed be a dullard or a pedant who fails to find much of interest and amusement in its well-written pages. The many illustrations, too, are often the production of leading Australian artists, who from the days of Phil May downwards have contributed to its pages. At the present time the drawings of the

brothers Norman and Lionel Lindsay would alone give the paper an artistic value ; and of the true humour contained in many of its clever pictures there can be no question. The verses, too, scattered throughout the paper are often clever, and are sometimes charming, for the *Bulletin* has for many years past been open to the efforts of native poets, many of whom have won their spurs of recognition on this rather hazardous literary tilting-ground. Thus the socialistic rhymes of Henry Lawson, the elegant lyrics of the late Victor Daley, the stirring stanzas of E. J. Brady and the effusions of many another bard have earned their merited rewards through the discriminating patronage of the editor, who evidently foresaw the coming brilliance of the poetical butterfly in its chrysalis stage. Besides the leading articles, the verses and the Society Letters (which last, as might only be expected, are both amusing and impudent), there always appear some short paragraphs under the heading of "Aboriginalities," which are sent from correspondents in all parts of the country and deal with matters relating to Australian natural history, place-names, strange customs, historical associations and other kindred topics. Many of these short contributions from various sources are of real value, though the writers thereof almost invariably assume the facetious and slangy style of expression which is affected by the regular members of the *Bulletin's* staff. For the journalese of this weekly paper is like nothing save itself, since the idioms are not borrowed either from British or American speech, but may be regarded as a peculiar brand of Austral-English. The curious method of its nomenclature will certainly puzzle and irritate the reader in his early attempts to appreciate the *Bulletin*. The many nicknames used will require elucidation, so that the stranger must learn in due course from some Australian friend that, amongst the many

cryptic phrases and names, "Bananaland" stands for Queensland; "Maoriland" for New Zealand; the "Apple Isle" for Tasmania, on account of its large export of apples; whilst the mother colony of New South Wales is often referred to as the "Ma State." "Fog Land" often denotes the British Isles, and the "Big Smoke" stands for London; and parenthetically, on the same principle of inventing synonyms for places that already possess their own recognised names, an English journal might fairly retaliate by applying the terms of "Dust Land," or "Drought Land," or even "Debt Land" to Australia itself! This form of merriment causes some amusement for a while, but one gets a little weary of its strained witticisms constantly repeated. I need hardly add that Britain and the British, from the Sovereign down to the humblest immigrant, offer a constant and convenient butt for the editorial pen.

As to its peculiar political views, nothing can appear sounder or more patriotic than the attitude assumed towards Australian self-defence in recent years by *The Sydney Bulletin*; yet at the same time nothing can be more annoying, and also more illogical, than its constant jeering at, and disparagement of, the Imperial policy and the Crown. Its cynical pessimism, too, is rather aggravating in this connection, for whilst it clearly exposes the real dangers of a possible future invasion of Australia and seemingly predicts the ultimate collapse of the much-vaunted "White Australia" doctrine under stress of foreign aggression, it yet takes every opportunity of slighting and insulting the one and only Power that either can or will save the threatened Commonwealth from the clutches of its indicated foe. Nevertheless, in spite of many shortcomings, the *Bulletin* continues the most national and also the most widely distributed of all the Australian papers; and though its expressed

views and comments often served to rouse my temporary indignation, I confess I always looked forward each week to its publication. Nor do I consider there exists a higher or sincerer form of appreciation than to admit enjoyment of that which one does not wholly approve.

IV

THE WILD FLORA OF SYDNEY HARBOUR

I DO not expect anyone except a genuine lover of flowers (which term does not necessarily denote a botanist in the scientific sense) to pay any heed to the ensuing short account of the Australian flora. It has been compiled by me simply with the view of affording some slight information on what I feel to be a wide and fascinating subject, of which I myself, although a lifelong lover of flowers, was woefully ignorant on my arrival in Australia. People at home are vaguely aware of the existence of a varied flora in the remote island-continent, but personally I can recall but few specimens of Australian plants that have been introduced into our gardens, in spite too of the recent and far-spreading craze for gardening. Indeed, one of the few instances I can remember of prominence being given of late years to an Australian native plant was at the Temple Flower Show of 1911, whereat a number of tubs containing small bushes of the common Red Bottle Brush (*Callistemon lanceolatus*) aroused a mild sensation among members of the horticultural world of fashion. And well they might, seeing that the shrubs in question were all resplendent with large heads of bloom formed of bright crimson threads, each separate thread tipped with a yellow speck, so that at a little distance the whole plant appeared to be covered with crimson silk tassels powdered with gold. This gorgeous shrub blooms luxuriantly in the spring throughout all parts of Australia, where it adorns equally the river-beds of tropical

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Queensland and the windy scrub-lands of Sydney Harbour.

The visitor's first acquaintance with the wild flowers of Australia will almost certainly be made in the streets of Melbourne or Sydney, for the extreme beauty of their native flora is now fully realised by Australians themselves. The broad space in front of the arcaded façade of the Sydney Post Office offered a gay appearance on the sunny September morning that I first set foot in New South Wales. And the general aspect of the tall gothic building, with its soaring tower, the passing crowds, the brilliant sunshine flooding the whole scene, the many canvas booths of the flower-sellers, somehow recalled vividly to my mind the old-world square of the Place de l'Hotel de Ville of Brussels with its cheerful and picturesque flower market. Here for the first time I saw exposed for sale bunches of the gorgeous Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*), so that I deemed myself especially fortunate in thus being able to inspect on my first landing in Sydney this monarch of all Australian native flowers. It is never easy to describe a flower, and the waratah, or native tulip, seems to possess the characteristics of several plants. In its growth it is a rather tall spindling shrub, usually from six to nine feet in height, with long pliant stems or rods bearing blunt serrated green leaves; whilst the tip of each leafy rod is crowned by the superb blossom, a combination both in form and colour of a peony and a poinsettia. Perhaps the waratah may best be likened to a tree-peony with a scarlet and crimson head of bloom; in any case, it certainly deserves its Latin epithet, which signifies "most beautiful."

The waratah (whose real aboriginal name is said to be mewah), grows plentifully in the sandstone valleys of the mountains of the Mother State, though I believe, it is rarely

found in limestone districts. It used to be quite common in the neighbourhood of Sydney, though now it has been extirpated within many miles of the capital, except in the protected area of National Park, where this striking plant may still be observed flourishing under natural conditions. The waratah is the acknowledged floral emblem of the State of New South Wales, although a smaller variety is also found in Victoria, and yet another species in Tasmania, the Tasmanian waratah being very inferior both in size and hue to that of the Mother State. I remember seeing in a beautiful garden at Mount Lofty, near Adelaide, these three varieties of waratah under cultivation, and all three growing together in great luxuriance.

There is a legend connected with the waratah, professing to be aboriginal in its source, but in reality, I suspect, of very modern decoction. This myth (which I relate briefly for what it is worth) tells how the glorious and youthful god Wa was expelled from heaven by his indignant father, because he had stooped to fall in love with the mortal Australian maiden, Atah. The exiled deity thereupon descended to earth in order to visit his lady-love, and on his way thither he rested on the summit of the Blue Mountains, the soil of which he touched "with the warmest kiss of his heart," as a salutation to the native land of his beloved. Scarcely had he withdrawn his lips than the stony soil heaved, and there sprang forth a tall plant with a marvellous red blossom of rare beauty. This new-born flower the god plucked to bear afar to Atah as a token of the warmth of his undying love. And henceforth the splendid and familiar plant that was begotten through the impassioned kiss of Wa on Australian soil has been known as "Waratah," in commemoration of the mutual love of a god and a mortal.

The popularity of this glorious flower naturally owns its drawbacks, for, in spite of some spasmodic efforts to protect it, its destruction for the sake of gain has long been proceeding apace; and unless the present lucrative traffic in waratah blooms is rigorously controlled within the next few years, this lovely native plant will cease to exist as a true wild flower, and its splendours will be restricted to private gardens and to the reserves, or wild public parks. Great tubs filled with the heavy crimson heads are to be seen for sale any day in spring in front of the Sydney Post Office, nor do the flower merchants ever fail to find purchasers in plenty. One of these men informed me that no wild waratahs were nowadays to be obtained for the market within forty miles of Sydney, most of the blooms for sale being supplied by country folk, chiefly in the gullies of the Blue Mountains, where great damage is done to the growing plants by these ruthless agents of the city flower-sellers. As an example of the wholesale selfish destruction of the waratah, I may mention that some thousands of blooms were gathered and despatched to Melbourne during the Cup Week of 1912, in order to decorate, for one night only, the ballroom at Federal Government House; a singularly glaring instance of thoughtless extravagance and waste, that was, I am glad to record, warmly resented by many Australian citizens. I have only to add that the shape and colour of the waratah lend themselves admirably to many forms of applied art, and that consequently artistic designs of this plant are frequently to be met with in the decorative schemes of innumerable houses throughout Australia.

The waratah, in conjunction with the golden wattle, has afforded romantic and convenient subject-matter for more than one generation of Australian poets, who especially love these two bright-hued flowers :



An Australian Aboriginal

"Australia, Australia, so fair to behold,
 While the blue sky is arching above ;
 The stranger should never have need to be told,
 That the Wattle-bloom means that her heart is of gold,
 And the Waratah's red blood of love."

In the month of September it was too late to see the yellow masses of "the wattle-bloom that the Sun-God loves," which is commonly regarded as the floral emblem of the Commonwealth of Australia, since various species of the wattle are to be found in abundance in each of the six States of the Union : "Wattle Day," which has been fixed for 1st September, now being kept universally as a public holiday. There are in all some three hundred varieties of the wattle-tree, or Australian acacia, all of them bearing fragrant yellow or white blossoms, and the majority of them flowering in the early spring months. Of these, the lovely Sydney Golden Wattle, with its long narrow pale green leaves and its glorious abundance of bright yellow spikes of feathery flowerets (*Acacia longifolia*), is chiefly associated with the State of New South Wales. Better known to us, however, is the Common Golden Wattle, with the serrated leaves, which grows so luxuriantly in greenhouses at home under the vague name of mimosa, and also flourishes well in the gardens of Italy and the Riviera. The Australian term wattle, that is always applied to the native acacias, is said to derive from the circumstance that the pliant branches of the various Australian acacias growing in the Bush near Sydney Cove were largely utilised by Governor Phillip's first company of settlers in 1788, who framed their temporary huts with them, and then daubed them over with clay in the approved style of "wattle and dab." Not only is the Australian acacia beautiful to the eye and grateful to the nostrils, but its bark is also found most useful for tanning purposes ; whilst its lovely

fragrant flowers are highly prized by all Australian bee-keepers.

Another handsome and popular native plant that blooms during the spring months is the so-called Rock Lily (*Dendrobium speciosum*), an orchid with large heavy spikes of pale yellow flowers, that used years ago to grow wild in the rocky clefts of Sydney Harbour, whence it became known as the Port Jackson Orchid. It is nowadays largely cultivated in rockeries, and its stout dark leaves and yellow flowers are conspicuous in almost every Sydney garden.

To these early months also belong the various boronias, whose powerful fragrance at once gives the lie direct to the ancient slander that all the flowers of Australia were scentless. The pink boronia, in appearance something between a belled heather and a broom, can be found in abundance in the marshy wastes not far from Sydney, or on the slopes of the Blue Mountains. Fragrant as are the pink boronias, they have not however the intense sweetness of the brown boronia of Western Australia, which I have already described. Another species of this interesting family is the Native Rose (*Boronia serrulata*), also very strongly scented and with small clusters of deep carmine bells. Even more common than the boronias is the pretty little bauera, not unlike Scotch heather in its colouring and mode of growth, which is still very plentiful on the rocky headlands of Sydney Harbour. The bauera has evidently a wide distribution, for I also found it growing freely on the higher slopes of Mount Wellington, in Tasmania, but having its blossoms of a pure white, instead of mauve.

Following fast upon the heels of the waratahs and the boronias, appear the dainty Flannel Flowers (*Actinotus helianthi*), another lovely denizen of these coastal regions. The flannel flower has grey crinkled leaves and tall stems bearing

blossoms of a silvery-white hue and of a velvety texture, so that it closely resembles a very large Alpine edelweiss. Huge bouquets of these soft starlike flowers are brought for sale into Sydney; and though in consequence of its popularity the flannel flower has become scarce near the city, yet I often managed to find clumps of it growing in out-of-the-way spots near the beetling crags overhanging the ocean between Bondi and the South Head of the harbour.

Long before the delicate fairy-like flannel flowers have disappeared, the woods and marshes of the country-side are all ablaze with the showy blooms of the blandfordias, commonly called "Christmas Bells" on account of their tall spikes of yellow and scarlet drooping trumpets. This is also a favourite wild flower, and it is truly a very striking one, but to my mind altogether too gaudy in its strong primary tints to appear ornamental within doors, though handsome enough in its natural surroundings.

Before December is well advanced, one sees everywhere what I may call the "Advent Flower of Australia," the shrub known as "Christmas Bush" (*Ceratopetalum gummiiferum*), which bears thick masses of small white flowerets with dull red leaves, that at a little distance appear of a vivid crimson. The Christmas Bush is an universal favourite, and on a Sunday evening in December every man, woman, or child returning home from a country ramble round Sydney seems to be carrying a bough of this elegant and showy bush.

Besides these cut flowers, the visitor to Sydney will probably note that all the gardens, and also many of the areas and balconies of suburban houses, are distinguished by large parasitic plants with heavy curling leaves, shaped like a conch-shell. These are the Elk-horn Ferns (*Platyserium alicorne*), which are not really ferns at all but non-flowering orchids, that

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are to be found growing on the tree-trunks of the coastal forests. In my opinion these vegetable monstrosities are more curious than ornamental, but the citizens of Sydney seem very partial to these bizarre additions to their gardens or verandahs, and once I counted as many as twenty of these strange plants in a very narrow space, whilst the fact that half of them seemed to be dead or dying did not add to the charm of the collection. Another popular fern is the gigantic Deer's Tongue (*Acrosticum conforme*), whose long glossy green leaves assume the upright form of an Eastern diadem. These large ferns are brought in to town on country carts, which are piled high with elk-horns, deers'-tongues, rock lilies and small palms for sale; and the constant appearance of these vehicles with their masses of tropical greenery gives a characteristic note to the Sydney streets (as does also the presence of the Chinese gardener, balancing his two deep baskets of fruit and vegetables on his long pole).

Yet another common but unfamiliar plant in any Sydney suburb is the grey salt-bush, which is usually tended and clipped as a screening hedge, much as we utilise the holly at home. The salt-bush, which is indigenous to the dry plains far out west, is ornamental when so treated, and has no unpleasant smell, so long as one refrains from cutting the juicy young shoots, when the bruised leaves emit a horrible odour as of putrid fish. In its native districts the salt-bush is greatly prized, for it will survive the severest spell of drought, and in time of famine will be eaten with relish by the starving cattle or sheep. It is regarded therefore as a valuable article of reserve fodder, and a boon to the pastoralists of the west, who live "on the salt-bush plain that is a wonderland."

A magnificent flowering plant that can be observed in the spring months either in gardens, or in its wild state amongst the gorges of the National Park or the Bulli Pass, is the Giant

Australian Lily (*Doryanthus excelsa*). This is a truly gigantic member of the lily tribe, having tall sword-like leaves of a pale green from the middle of which uprises a solitary thick stem, often ten feet in height, This stem terminates in a mass of coarse rose-pink blossoms,affording the likeness of a veritable crimson mop with a long green handle. I remember once, many years ago, seeing a coloured illustration in an old-fashioned early work on New Holland, wherein these tall lilies had been introduced so as to form a background for the antics of a number of naked black-fellows, armed with spears and boomerangs. At the time I first studied this highly coloured print, I thought the painter must have drawn somewhat on a flowery imagination ; but seeing at last meant believing, when I set eyes on a group of these floral giants in the woody glade of a large garden on the north shore of Sydney Harbour. There is also a variety of this giant lily to be found in Queensland (*D. Palmeri*), having similar foliage but with the single flower-stalk bent low and curved, as though drooping from the over-weight of its pink efflorescence. In the Sydney Botanic Garden—most interesting and delightful of all horticultural retreats !—I was fortunate enough to see these two magnificent Southern lilies in bloom side by side ; and I was amused by one of the gardeners descanting to me with regional pride on the marked superiority of what he called the “ New South Wales lily ” over its Queensland rival !

Yet another fine Australian lily is the crinum, or spider lily, a large succulent plant with masses of white spidery-looking blooms that are very sweet-scented. The crinum lily is a native of the Northern Rivers' district of New South Wales, but flourishes well near Sydney. It is one of the best known plants in our hot-houses that have been introduced from Australia.

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Of my many pleasant Australian recollections and novel experiences, not the least delightful do I rank my first day's ramble in the waste lands that still await the advent of the surveyor and builder on the outskirts of North Sydney. Beyond the suburbs runs an inlet of the harbour, and again beyond this woody inlet stretches a wide space of open scrub-covered land, that in the latter part of September seemed a new world for the botanist, so filled was it with unfamiliar but intensely beautiful and interesting plants, trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses. For hours I was walking waist-deep in a thick pathless mass of undergrowth, varied by sandy or stony patches; and before the afternoon was ended I had amassed a grand selection of flowering plants and shrubs, of which I then knew not a single specimen by name. To make mention of a few only, there were several of the *Epacridæ*, a genus of heaths that is peculiar to Australia, of which the elegant *E. longifolia*, or Native Fuchsia, was the most prominent. This beautiful flower has long pliant stems covered with small dark triangular leaves, and bears spikes of long trumpet-shaped flowers of pure white and deep crimson. This epacris, which is not uncommon in English greenhouses, was first seen in blossom in Europe in 1806, so that it must rank as one of the earliest of the Australian flora to be exported home by the settlers of New South Wales. The plant, however, which has the honour of being the very first to be introduced into England from these shores was the handsome Dwarf Apple (*Angophora cordifolia*), a conspicuous shrub with masses of white fluffy blossoms, that was successfully propagated from some seed-pods brought to Europe by Sir Joseph Banks. The dwarf apple, which was seen blooming freely in an Islington garden so long ago as the year 1787, was very abundant in this spot.

Another very striking plant was the Honey Flower



Flannel Flowers



Bunch of Waratahs

(*Lambertia formosa*), with small pointed glaucous leaves, that could inflict a good sharp prick on marauding fingers. The *Lambertia*, which is said to be confined to this State, has numbers of heavy bell-shaped flowers of scarlet and pink that are usually sticky with a rank honey, much sought after by the pretty little honey-eaters, who dip their long curved bills deep down into these showy blossoms and thus help to propagate the species. Everywhere too were clumps of the curious *Banksias*, or native honeysuckles, a most important and unique genus of Australian trees. When allowed to grow freely, the *Banksia* has generally a gnarled, straggling growth, but sometimes it reaches a considerable height. There are several varieties of this tree, but all of them are distinguished by their large coarse yellow or white blossoms, shaped like bottle-brushes, which are heavy with honey and are consequently much enjoyed by the honey-eating birds, and also by the aborigines; whilst even in the early days of scarcity and short-commons the half-starved colonists of Sydney Cove did not disdain to suck these floral cones. Historically, the botanical name owns considerable interest, for it was so christened in honour of Sir Joseph Banks, the close friend and companion of Captain Cook on board the *Endeavour*, who first descried these strange trees on the shores of Botany Bay. Says Mr White in his "Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales," which is one of the earliest descriptions of Australia we possess, "the finest new genus hitherto found in New Holland has been destined by Linnæus to transmit to posterity the name of Sir Joseph Banks, who first discovered it in his celebrated voyage round the world." The vulgar name of honeysuckle has of course been given to these trees on account of the honey wherewith their flowers are clogged. "The honeysuckle tree," writes Mrs Meredith, the charming Tasmanian flower painter, "is so unreasonably

named, so very unlike any sort or species of the sweet old flower whose name it bears so unfittingly. The blossoms form cones, which when in full bloom are much the size and shape of a large English teazle."

Amongst a host of flowering shrubs, the most beautiful in my opinion was the Lemon Plant, one of the many *Ereostemons* (*E. salicifolia*), which grows about two feet high and has rather the habit of a young dwarf willow, whence its Latin epithet. Upon its stem it carries a number of star-shaped flowers of a shell-like pink which show of a deep rose tint in the buds, so that the whole plant when in bloom resembles a peach or almond bough set in the bare earth. It was my own favourite of all the wild flowers I saw in Australia, especially since, in addition to its elegance of form and delicacy of colouring, it also possessed a faint but delicious perfume. Closely related to the lemon plant, though not so lovely, is the *Crowea saligna*, with bright pink or mauve blossoms, that blooms in the winter months, when it is especially welcome during a season of floral scarcity.

On all sides were to be seen bushes of the Tea Tree (*Leptospermum scoparium*), the manuka of New Zealand, a myrtle-like aromatic shrub, or small tree, covered with white blossoms, which is said to owe its popular name to the decoction brewed from its leaves long ago by Captain Cook's scurvy-smitten sailors on the shores of Botany Bay. Mingled with the many shrubs and grasses of the stony hill-side were to be seen several delicate small flowering orchids, pink, white, mauve and yellow. I was able to recognise the so-called "Bush Iris," with bright purple flowers, growing here and there in clumps, and at a distance resembling a Spanish Iris, though it must actually be closely related to the old-fashioned *tradescantia* of our English gardens. Smaller and less conspicuous was the

"Bush Violet," which is scentless, and indeed is not a violet at all. Another striking plant was the graceful *Dianella*, with long grassy leaves and tall stems with masses of lilac flowerets, which later in the year are replaced by large berries of a lovely turquoise blue.

Perhaps the most remarkable plant of all to my stranger's eyes was the native grass-tree, or *xanthorrhæa*, sometimes called Black-fellow's Spear, which figures conspicuously in so many early Australian pictures, and is highly characteristic of almost all Australian scenery. The grass-tree usually shows at least a foot of protruding black root-stump, from the top of which sprouts a thick bunch of coarse shining grass, that in spring-time throws up a tall stem varying in height from three to twelve feet. This natural spike bears a minute white efflorescence, and when withered it can be easily snapped off and turned into a capital toy-spear for children. The *xanthorrhæa* is no great favourite with the farmer, for its presence always denotes a poor, if not a worthless, soil; but to the botanist this quaint and picturesque plant always adds a pleasing note of novelty to the scene.

Almost equally interesting were my many rambles upon the rocky promontories and cliffs near the South Head of the harbour and the sandy hillocks of Bondi, a wind-swept district that affords a variety of pleasant views of the distant city, the harbour with its masses of shipping and the boundless expanse of the Pacific to eastward. A delicious invigorating breeze seems ever to sweep across these headlands, so that it is scarcely a matter of marvel that suburbs innumerable are rapidly invading this rather sterile region of sun-baked rocks and sandy tracts. And of a truth, a veritable avalanche of bricks and mortar seems of recent years to have burst forth

from the heart of Sydney, so that it cannot be long before the whole of this district will be "developed"—that is, covered with neat cottages and villas of the usual unlovely Australian type. I do not wish to carp at this newly-sprung spirit of civic progress; but I am thankful to feel that I was privileged to see something of the pristine beauties of these shores, before they are finally metamorphosed into a series of flourishing suburbs of Greater Sydney.

Everywhere on these rocky stretches were to be descried innumerable shrubs and plants, of which many were quite distinct from those I had already noted as growing on the North Shore. Even in the partially developed neighbourhood of Vacluse and Rose Bay, I observed various interesting specimens. Close to the harbour's edge and flourishing in the sandy soil, together with the native bracken-fern, were masses of the trailing Water Hibbertia, or Yellow Dog-rose (*H. volubilis*), with succulent leaves and large handsome yellow flowers that have a fetid odour. The *Polygola grandiflora*, with tasselled blossoms of purple and white, which is so common a plant in our English greenhouses, grew here luxuriantly amidst the boulders near the tramway; and close by I found great clumps of the melianthus, one of the most striking of herbaceous growths, with huge grey pinnate leaves and tall spikes of dark reddish blossoms. It was at Vacluse, too, I rather think, that I first made acquaintance in its wild state with the hated lantana, perhaps the most dreaded and most rampant of all Australian imported pests except the prickly pear. With its many gay heads of pink, yellow and orange blooms this pest-plant is rather agreeable to the eye of the stranger, and indeed some dwarf varieties of the lantana are often grown in Australian gardens. But in its wild state this aromatic shrub is an universal nuisance, embracing neglected

gardens in its thorny arms near a town and choking up water-courses in the Bush. (I shall never forget the sight of this gay-flowered weed on the Clarence River, where the banks on either side were covered for mile after mile with impenetrable thickets of the lantana.) In one deserted quarry near Sydney I was amused to note the struggles of this pest for mastery with a rival imported shrub—*videlicet*: the common blackberry-bush—which is increasing dangerously in these southern coastal regions, and threatens in time to surpass the lantana itself in its powers of mischief. In another place I was much interested in seeing an immense mass of the familiar mauve pelargoniums, apparently quite wild, growing to the size of rhododendrons and filling the air with their sweet perfume.

When walking amongst the brushwood within sight of historic Botany Bay, I could not but feel a thrill of pride at the thought of my thus collecting botanical specimens close to the spot, perhaps on the actual ground, traversed by the distinguished scientists Sir Joseph Banks and Dr Solander, who were the first white men privileged to gaze with appreciative and understanding eyes upon the unique flora of a new continent. “The great quantity of plants Mr Banks and Dr Solander found in this place occasioned my giving it the name of Botany Bay,” thus quietly records, on 6th May 1770, Captain Cook, who was assisted by this circumstance to invent a more poetical and descriptive name for these shores than that of Sting-ray Bay, which he had previously adopted.

A mild form of excitement is likewise added to the natural zest of these botanical expeditions, whether in the scrub-lands near Botany Bay or in the dense thickets around Kurnell, the southern promontory of the Bay itself, by the possible and by no means improbable accident of treading on the fatal Death Adder (*Acanthopus antarctica*). This ugly serpent, whose brown

form is usually concealed by the undergrowth, is still very plentiful in these sandy or marshy wildernesses, though of late years its numbers have declined owing to the advance of local population. The death, or deaf, adder is a thick, repulsive-looking snake of moderate length, with a broad flat evil head and with a small bony tip to its tail: an appendage which in the opinion of some naturalists denotes its near relationship with the equally dreaded rattlesnake of North America. On account of its sluggish nature, which prevents it from moving away from the oncomer, and the fatal bite it is liable to inflict when thus accidentally trodden upon, this adder inspires more alarm and caution than any other of the various poisonous serpents of Australia; and anent this particular reptile I once heard an amusing Bush anecdote, the veracity of which I have no reason to doubt. On one occasion three weary drovers, after a long day's tramp through the Bush, settled down for the night in a sheltered spot, by carelessly laying down a waterproof rug on the bare ground. All three men flung themselves simultaneously on the outspread coverlet, and were speedily enjoying the dreamless sleep of the exhausted and the just. On awaking at sunrise and lifting the rug, the men were horrified to find the dead body of a fine death adder on the site of their late slumbers, crushed to instantaneous death by the combined weight of the three sleepers suddenly and simultaneously descending on the reptile's hideous carcass.

During my many walks in these waste lands around Sydney I was disappointed by the paucity of the butterflies observed. And of the few species I noticed on these occasions, only two were remarkable for size or brilliance of colouring, most of the others being merely variants of species that are familiar at home. Of these two, one was the large, handsome, tiger-coloured, gauzy-winged creature with elaborate black markings, which

is known to Australians equally by the names of the "Brown Gipsy" and the "Monarch" (*Danaïs menippe*). It is, however, an imported insect, being a true native of North America, where, under the name of the "Balmoral Butterfly," I remember meeting with it frequently in the pastures of the New England hills. The other prominent butterfly was the elegant "Wanderer" (*Papilio sarpedon*), so called from its restless and erratic flight, which has swallow-tailed under-wings of a deep velvety black with patches of pale green. This beautiful insect is quite common in the gardens of Sydney, where the caterpillar feeds chiefly on the scented leaves of the many camphor-laurels. Indeed, south of tropical Queensland the only other remarkable butterfly of New South Wales is the striking "Bird-winged Butterfly" (*Ornithoptera richmondia*), which has a gold-coloured body and wide wings of green and black; but this handsome creature is only found some distance north of Sydney, in the region of the Northern Rivers.

There are, of course, numerous ants, beetles and locusts, but like Lewis Carroll's beloved little Alice, personally I do not much "rejoice in insects," other than moths and butterflies. One importunate cicada (*Cyclochila australis*), however, always forces itself on the aural attention, as the Australian summer advances. It is vulgarly, but incorrectly, termed a locust, for it is in reality a genuine cicada, and rather an attractive-looking insect, with big transparent wings, large yellow eyes and a plump green body. In the hot weather about Christmas-tide every tree in or near Sydney resounds with the noise of these creatures, which, as the naturalist Backhouse observed long ago, keep up a constant rattle like that of a cotton-mill. At times the din is almost maddening, and sufficient to drown all conversation in a garden or verandah. Sometimes the street urchins contrive to catch a locust, and by shaking him

in the closed palm of the hand produce the same loud chirruping noise.

I have written thus briefly, and I fear feebly, upon a subject wherein I am especially anxious to enlist sympathy and interest; for the adequate protection of the world's wild flowers is becoming a serious question, not only in Australia, but in all civilised and thickly populated countries. It seems to me outrageous that the flora of any land, which is Nature's free gift to all alike, should be ruthlessly exploited by the few, whether it be for the sake of monetary gain or for mere gratification of the inborn instinct for plunder. We pluck the flowers growing in our own cultivated gardens with care and judgment, so that the plants which produce them may not receive permanent injury, but may continue to bloom for us season after season, to decorate our houses and to brighten our lives. Surely these fundamental unwritten laws of the garden might also be reasonably applied to some extent to the many interesting and beautiful wild plants that Nature rears for us all in plain, forest, meadow, marsh and mountain, which still produce a sufficiency of flowers for all of us to help ourselves to *in moderation*. But the stupid spoliation of the town-bred tourist, and the accursed greed of the florist and his emissaries, are beginning to threaten the very existence of certain of the choicest wild plants of Australia. And yet, if wild flowers of themselves possess any marketable value (which is a thing that cannot be denied and must be duly reckoned with), nobody has the moral right to pick and sell what is the common property of all. If the native fauna is at least nominally protected by law, why cannot the flora of Australia be placed likewise under official protection? Animals and birds have at least some chance of escape from their pursuers,

but plants with a market value are of course utterly at the mercy of the devastating flower-seekers for gain. I assert it is the positive duty of every enlightened and progressive Government to save the heritage of all for the benefit of all, and thus from time to time to frame and enforce regulations to prevent the extirpation of many rare and interesting species. The admirable system of "national parks," or wild tracts of country set aside in the vicinity of the larger cities, has certainly done much to preserve the native flora and fauna ; but something further is needed to check the uprooting and indiscriminate gathering of plants that bloom outside these few official sanctuaries.

When I was in Sydney I was much impressed by the genuine appreciation, amounting to real affection, that the Australian people manifest for their native wild flowers, so that I feel sure that, loving them as they do, they will the more readily concur in any official efforts to rescue their flora from extinction, and for the future to prevent such an exhibition of wicked waste as the gathering of waratahs by the thousand to decorate a ballroom for a single night. And if the rather familiar outcry be raised by interested persons, that for the State to interfere on behalf of wild flowers is absurd and undemocratic, let the people of Australia recall that the truly democratic cantons of Switzerland (which has been a federal union of States ever since the Middle Ages), has lately found it expedient and necessary to adopt this very plan with regard to the beautiful Alpine flora, which the wanton plucking by ignorant tourists and the wholesale uprooting by greedy villagers were threatening to exterminate. Let Australia, therefore, which prides herself on her naturally democratic instincts, learn a lesson from this European republic. Surely the splendid waratah, the dainty boronias, the gorgeous Christmas bells, the exquisite

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flannel flowers are fully as worthy subjects of State legislation as are the cyclamen, the edelweiss, the anemone, the gentian and the alpenrose, that the Swiss Government has now determined to protect, in the interests of the many, from the campaign of lucre and destruction by the few? I earnestly hope and trust that Australia will follow the lead of Switzerland in this respect, and thereby show the world at large that an advancing and progressive nation is fully alive to true sentiment and to the just claims of æstheticism, by taking speedy steps to preserve her people's heritage of their wild flowers before it becomes too late to do so.

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THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

“ON Tuesday, 11th May 1813, Mr Gregory Blaxland, Mr William Wentworth and Lieutenant William Lawson (of the New South Wales Corps), attended by four servants, with five dogs, four horses laden with provisions, ammunition and other necessaries, left Mr Blaxland’s farm at the South Creek, for the purpose of endeavouring to effect a passage over the Blue Mountains.” We have only to add that the complete success of this enterprise of exploration truly “changed the aspect of the colony of New South Wales from a confined insulated tract to a rich and extensive continent.”

Such was a final unveiling of the mystery that had enshrouded the distant ranges of hazy blue mountains, which had originally been named the Carmarthen Beacons by Captain Cook, but were subsequently known to the early colonists of Sydney by the descriptive name of the Blue Mountains. For a quarter of a century this elevated rocky table-land had formed the westernmost limit of the young colony, and its beetling sandstone precipices had hitherto defied successfully the efforts of many an enthusiastic pioneer, including even the intrepid George Bass, the navigator of the Straits between Australia and Tasmania, that still bear his name. To us it may seem passing strange that the early settlers of New South Wales should have allowed this natural barrier to remain uncrossed for so long a period, seeing that it is visible from Port Jackson itself, and is of no great height, its loftiest point

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being barely three thousand six hundred feet above sea-level, less even than the peak of Snowdon. But we must take into consideration the peculiar nature of the ground to be traversed in the attempt, as well as the extreme difficulties of transport and of commissariat that harassed all the early explorers, although the whole range lies within eighty miles of Sydney. It was only after partial failures by such tried explorers as Bass and Bareilleir and others, that in May 1813, just a century ago, the trio already mentioned actually achieved their object. Leaving Emu Plains with a small but well-equipped train of men, horses and dogs, Blaxland and his two younger companions by good luck hit on what happens to be the one and only practicable route—namely, the wooded eastern slopes that face the Nepean River. In reading to-day Blaxland's artless little narrative of his adventures, we easily grow to realise the extreme difficulty of his self-set task. Not only had every scrap of food to be carried, but also fodder for the horses, for no pasture was to be found in the gum-woods, or on the sandy soil of the table-land, save some rank sour couch-grass round the boggy patches. There were no native guides, although Blaxland reports the disconcerting fact that he knew all the movements of his party were being constantly spied upon by the few unseen aborigines who haunted the gum-forests of the valleys, and presumably looked with scant favour upon the dreaded white man's invasion of their ancient hunting-grounds. So dense was the brushwood, that the future track had first to be "blazed," or marked out, before the pack-horses could be allowed to follow with the provisions and the sleeping-kit. Still the little band had undoubtedly started on the right path, for it was working its way surely along the flat table-land, without becoming exhausted in vain attempts to scale the steep and well-nigh inaccessible precipices of the adjacent

gullies. Having reached the plateau at a point near what is now called the Wentworth Falls, progress onward became naturally very slow, owing to the density of the scrub,¹ through which they had to force their way step by step. Even at the present day, when the plateau of the Blue Mountains serves as a familiar playground for the citizens of Sydney, and extensive building operations have been taken in hand, it is not hard to gauge the extremely troublesome nature of the task of thus penetrating this upland region, covered wholly, as it then was, with masses of stunted gum-trees, varied by patches of sandy or swampy soil amidst the surrounding scrub. Fighting thus against so many natural obstacles and ever running the risk of an attack from the hovering but never-seen black-fellows in the dense thickets, the three explorers at last reached Pulpit Hill, a spot on the southern cliffs about two miles beyond the modern township of Katoomba, close to the entrance of the Megalong cleft, where they found the rude cairn that had been hastily raised by Bass at the farthest point to which he had with infinite difficulty attained. From this spot, indeed, that capable pioneer had retired baffled to Sydney, where on his arrival he had assured the authorities "that it was impossible to find a passage, even for a person on foot."² Beside this memento of Bass's failure, young Lawson found a large eucalypt which he duly "blazed" with his initials, and the stump of the tree thus marked by Lawson has of recent years been enclosed within railings by order of the Government, an inscriptive tablet placed thereon, and a young golden wattle-bush planted in memory of the three friends; so that the

¹ The term "scrub" in Australia is always used to denote thick undergrowth.

² This was in 1796. Mystery hangs over the ultimate fate of Bass. The *D. N. B.* (vol. iii.) states that he left Australia in 1799 to return home to England, but that nothing further is known of his career. Another report relates that he was executed for piracy at Valparaiso.

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“ Explorers’ Tree ” is nowadays a familiar object to all travellers on the highroad between Katoomba and Medlow Bath. Lawson’s handiwork is no longer visible on the dead trunk ; but, alas ! it need hardly be added, the initials of many less distinguished compatriots have been only too clearly cut thereon.

From Pulpit Hill, loftily situated above the beetling crags of what is now called Nelly’s Glen, the party proceeded westwards as far as Mount York, the great prominent bluff that invades the plain a little beyond Mount Victoria, and stands out like some huge bastion of a giant’s castle. Here they pitched their final camp, and from this point of vantage beheld the limitless plains of the west stretching away towards the sunset. Having thus accomplished their mission of the finding, or rather the making, of a trail across these pathless ranges, and their valuable discovery of a fertile champaign country lying beyond them, the three explorers returned to Sydney thoroughly pleased (as well they might be) with the results of their brief but arduous expedition.

Happily for the infant colony, energetic old Lachlan Macquarie reigned at Government House in those days, with the result that no effort was spared to turn to the public advantage these recent discoveries of Blaxland and his companions. Various officials, headed by Inspector Evans, with gangs of labourers, mostly convicts, were promptly despatched to the Blue Mountains to clear ground and to prepare rough maps of the whole district, with the intention of constructing a regular roadway across them at no distant date. Towards the close of April 1815—that is, within two years of this late successful enterprise—the Governor expressed his readiness to undertake an official tour of the lately discovered and newly surveyed territory. This official progress, in which Mrs Macquarie and

a large suite took part, was carried out free of any untoward incident, and indeed with a minimum of discomfort to the illustrious travellers, who were attended by no fewer than forty servants. Many of the place-names that are familiar to tourists in the Blue Mountains were bestowed during his progress by the inventive Governor, who christened the finest valley of all in honour of his guest, John Jamieson. We have no space here to write more of this interesting tour of visitation, which ended with the formal foundation of the city of Bathurst on the rich western plains beyond the mountains, and thus constitutes a most important episode in the history of the colony of New South Wales. Suffice it to say, as the immediate result of Governor Macquarie's visit of inspection, there was issued the order for the construction of a highroad from Sydney to the newly born township of Bathurst, one hundred and seventeen miles distant, the new thoroughfare being carried right over the opposing but now conquered Blue Mountains, and following in the main the track originally marked out by the three adventurous colonists of May 1813. In Macquarie Place in the city, which is only five minutes' walk from Circular Quay, can still be seen the ornate stone obelisk that was erected at Governor Macquarie's command to record this all-important undertaking, the main charge of which was entrusted by him to William Cox, who had for his road-labourers the pick of the able-bodied convicts then serving in the penal settlement.

The geological system of the Blue Mountains consists of a long sinuous stretch of table-land, deeply indented by numerous wooded gullies, both broad and narrow, and having an elevation that only varies from two thousand eight hundred feet at Wentworth Falls to three thousand six hundred feet at Mount

York. This lofty plateau is upborne by very steep hill-sides of deep red, pink or orange-coloured sandstone, which in many places form precipices that often fall a sheer thousand feet and more into the valleys below. As a popular upland resort, this range possesses the unique characteristic of having all its fine scenic effects below and not above the spectator, who in this instance finds himself dwelling on the very top of the mountains themselves, and not in valleys at their base, as in the Alps and the mountainous regions of the Old World; indeed, from Katoomba the tourist has to walk for some distance downhill before he can enjoy the famous scenery at all.

The whole of this range lies within easy reach of Sydney, the journey by rail to Katoomba, the largest of the various townships of the plateau, occupying barely three hours. Soon after passing historic Parramatta, with its glimpse of Old Government House and park, the "Bush," or primeval forest, may be said to begin, though it is diversified by many orange-groves, orchards and vineyards, for a good deal of fruit is grown in these outlying districts. The broad Nepean River, a tributary of the Hawkesbury, is crossed, and ere long the little station of Emu Plains at the base of the mountains is reached. This last-named place arouses some interest, as having been the starting-point of Blaxland's expedition of 1813; whilst the local name recalls the distant days when the huge wingless native bird used to wander over these river flats. The emu has long been driven hence by advancing settlement, for, more than sixty years ago, Colonel Mundy relates that "he who expects to find emus on Emu Plains will no more succeed than he would in finding buffaloes in the streets of Buffalo"!

From this place the line begins rapidly to ascend, until the eastern end of the elongated and lofty table-land is finally gained at Lawson and Wentworth Falls; whilst Leura,

Katoomba, Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Mount Victoria follow in quick succession. Of these growing mountain resorts Katoomba is the largest, and has spread so rapidly that nowadays it practically adjoins with Leura. Being so near to Sydney, the Blue Mountain district is naturally much affected by the people of the capital, especially at the seasons of Christmas and Easter; numbers of wealthy citizens, too, own cottages here for the summer months, notably in the vicinity of the Wentworth Falls. But in spite of the considerable altitude, one certainly does not escape the summer heat up here, and in February I found Katoomba almost as hot as, and even less shady than, the streets of Sydney; whilst the mosquitoes were fully as troublesome at night, and indeed worse, for there is an absence of nets, on the false assumption that these hateful little pests do not exist in the Mountains. I daresay the Blue Mountains are very bracing in the winter months, but between Christmas and Easter, though the air here is fresher and cooler at night, there is little to choose between the climate of the coast and that of this elevated plateau. Howbeit it has become the recognised fashion for all and sundry to ascend hither in the hot season, so that the influx of visitors is enormous and ever tends to increase. The townships are rapidly growing in size, and so much land is in process of being developed for building purposes that ere long there will be formed one continuous line of houses stretching along the road from Wentworth Falls to Blackheath. Under these circumstances it is only natural to find that a good deal of the pristine charm of this region has already disappeared; and the latest decision, to have motor-omnibuses that will traverse the whole table-land from end to end (although it is already well served by the double railway-line from Sydney to Bathurst, as well as by a broad main road), must shortly add a suburban

aspect to the whole district. At present the many excursions are principally made by brakes, with two, three, four, or even five horses ; but presumably with the impending advent of the hideous and noisy motor-bus, the older and pleasanter form of conveyance will become obsolete.

Happily the actual scenery of the Blue Mountains, lying far below the crowded plateau with its congested settlements, cannot be seriously spoiled or vulgarised by these changes. One has to walk, it is true, for some distance along dusty, untidy roads, past a succession of unlovely cottages and villas, before reaching the edge of the plateau ; but having once attained to any one of the various "look-outs," or points of view, on the brink of the great natural supporting walls of sandstone, the unique panorama bursts unexpectedly upon the sight. For, standing on the lip of the sheer precipice, one gazes down below into a seemingly boundless forest of pale grey-tinted tree-tops ; whilst on the level with the eye stretch endless lines of bold flat-topped cliffs that in the far distance melt "into some shade of blue unnamable," so vivid and ethereal is that wondrous azure haze, which has supplied an all-too-obvious epithet to this wonderful region of rocks and forests. A first impression of the space, the colouring, the atmosphere will remain fixed for ever in the mind of the stranger who has gazed over the wooded expanse of the Jamieson Valley, whether his first glimpse be obtained from Wentworth Falls or from the precipices of Leura or Katoomba. The clear-cut, rose-red walls seem to enclose a gigantic natural basin filled with dense forest, in the midst of which uprises, like some craggy island set amidst an encroaching sea of grey-green foliage, the long form of Mount Solitary in its majestic and well-nigh inaccessible isolation. Strange it is to read to-day in Blaxland's early account of his discoveries, that the

first pioneers to behold this marvellous spectacle actually mistook the serried masses of gum-trees lying more than a thousand feet below them, for a valley filled with coarse grass !

The surface waters of this long twisting table-land naturally gravitate towards the cliffs, so that many waterfalls empty themselves into the various valleys below. In winter-time the appearance of the frozen Falls at Katoomba is said to be one of surpassing loveliness, especially when viewed on a moonlit night, when the surrounding ground is deep in newly fallen snow. But in the summer, after a spell of hot dry weather, the volume of water becomes insignificant, and the different cascades are in most cases reduced to mere rillets falling over dripping rocks. Nevertheless, these Falls after a wet season offer a fine spectacle, especially at Katoomba, where the water takes two successive leaps, each of about five hundred feet, before it reaches the belt of forest below. In a thirsty land, such as Australia, it is perhaps only natural that these Falls should be regarded as one of the chief features of the scenery of the Blue Mountains, though most European travellers will of necessity be sadly disappointed at their scarcity of water. But, in any case, these cascades, however attenuated their volume, make a cool plashing sound, and their continual moisture all the year round is the cause of a rich vegetation upon the hanging walls of damp rock, that afford a most pleasing contrast with the prevailing sombre tints of grey and yellow in the selvage around. Each hollow beneath the Falls is well covered with every variety of fern, from the huge rock ferns and red ferns and umbrella ferns to the tiniest of maiden-hair. Near the base of these dripping cliffs, too, is found the splendid Palm-fern (*Alsophila australis*), whose pale green fronds, sometimes ten feet in length, can be clearly perceived from above amidst the dense undergrowth of the gum-forests.

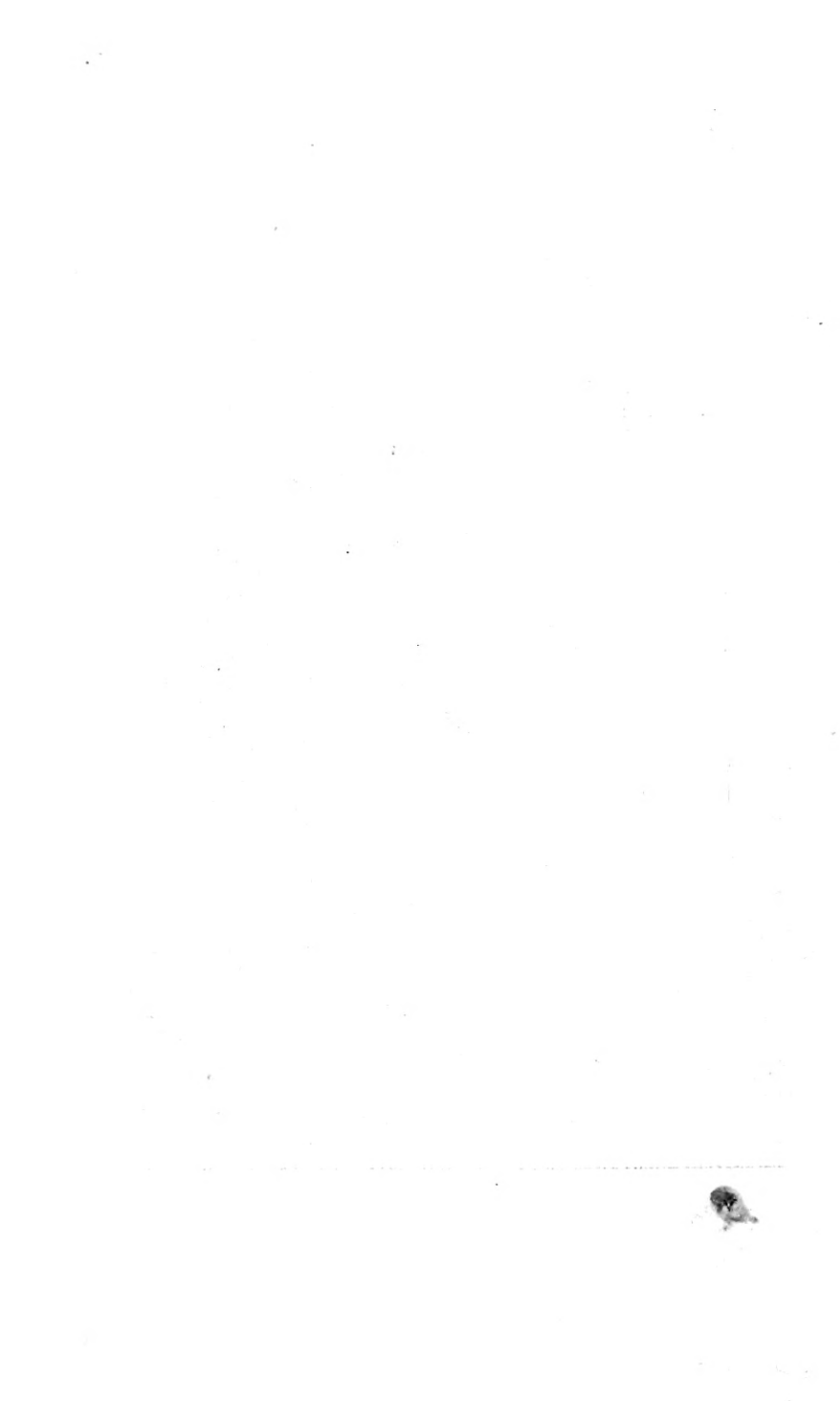
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Some of these palm-ferns grow to a considerable size, and I myself measured one that was fully twenty-five feet high. The damp soil, too, allows the native beech to flourish here, and its dark glossy leaves contribute a note of rich green to the sad-coloured foliage of the eternal stringy-bark and other gum-trees. It is a real delight to find a quiet corner in these woodlands or else a coign of vantage on some outlying shelf of ancient sandstone, and there to lie watching the glorious landscape and allowing its peculiar but very real charm to sink deep into the soul. Happily, too, the gun is forbidden in these Government reserves, so that now and again the visitor who remains sufficiently quiet may be rewarded with a sight of the gorgeous crimson and purple parrots as they flash past with joyful, raucous cries to seek shelter from the noontide sunshine in the cool beech groves near the murmuring waters. Usually, however, the deep impressive silence of these ancient forests is rarely broken, save by the musical note of the native magpie or by an abrupt outburst of cachinnation from the laughing-jackass.

There are, of course, many expeditions to be made either on foot or by carriage from Katoomba; but though the various show-places differ in their details, the type of scenery in this region is everywhere essentially the same. To my mind, the wide expanding view from Furber's Steps, near the Katoomba Falls, is the finest and most impressive of all, embracing, as it does, the whole of the vast amphitheatre of the Jamieson Valley, with the curious triple-peaked cliff of the "Three Sisters" and the rugged detached bluff called the "Orphan" in the near foreground. Nevertheless, even bolder are the cliffs at Govett's Leap, which is about two miles from Blackheath, where the spectator gazes northwards towards the deep wooded valley of the River Grose, whilst he stands on the edge

Giovetts' Leap





of a terrific concave precipice, beside a cataract that throughout the hours of sunshine gleams with glorious prismatic reflections. The name of this spot was conferred by the Surveyor-General, Sir T. Mitchell, in the year 1830, in honour of his assistant-surveyor, William Romaine Govett. Govett himself, in his manuscript Journal, now preserved in the Public Library of Sydney, clearly states that "the Surveyor-General named this place Govett's Leap, from the circumstance of my having first come upon the spot when surveying with Mr Rusden, and having sent in a description of the scene in my official letter." But this casual remark unfortunately sweeps away some cobwebs of bygone romance that have long hung over this magnificent and truly awe-inspiring scene, which presents one of the wildest and sternest of natural prospects on the face of the globe. How the tradition arose that poor industrious Govett, most respectable knight of the compass and theodolite, was ever in his life a wild, intractable bush-ranger, goodness only knows! Such, however, is the case, and so strong-lived has the absurd legend proved, that in the spring of 1913, when some building plots near the Leap were advertised for sale in Sydney, the poster bearing the necessary information was enriched with a highly coloured picture of a rough-bearded bush-ranger, in a red flannel shirt and astride a fiery steed, leaping, like Quintus Curtius of ancient Rome, into a fathomless abyss. The myth too has ramified into various versions, one of which states that Govett was pursued to his death over the precipice by members of the mounted constabulary, who, on searching in the forest below the Leap, were unable to find the corpse of either their victim or his horse: a statement that adds a touch of the uncanny to the untrue. Another version is that Govett never leaped the cliff at all, but contrived to escape from the police by hiding himself in the

thick scrub near the cascade, and that he eventually escaped to England, where he made a fortune and lived happily ever after. Such are the romantic tales of this place, still passing current with the Australian public ; and even if unveracious in every detail, they are certainly more exciting than the plain prosaic testimony of Govett himself in his official notebook.

Govett's Leap owns the distinction of being the view most admired by Charles Darwin during his visit to Australia in 1836. Darwin describes the scenery of the Blue Mountains as being "quite novel and extremely magnificent" ; and in particular he praises this stupendous vista from Govett's Leap. In happily chosen language the scientist writes of the unique character of this strange region : "These valleys, which so long presented an insuperable barrier to the attempts of the most enterprising of the colonists to reach the interior, are most remarkable. Great arm-like bays, expanding at their upper ends, often branch from the main valleys and penetrate the sandstone platform ; on the other hand, the platform often sends promontories into the valleys, and even leaves in them great, almost insulated, masses. To descend into some of these valleys, it is necessary to go round twenty miles ; and into others the surveyors have only lately penetrated, and the colonists have not been able to drive in their cattle. But the most remarkable feature in their structure is that, although several miles wide at their heads, they generally contract towards their mouths to such a degree as to become impassable."

Readers of that delightful and ever-fresh romance, "Robbery under Arms," will recall the entrancing description of the Terrible Hollow, wherein the Marstons and "Starlight" kept their stolen cattle and horses concealed from the searching eyes of the police. For here the visitor will at once recognise the type of natural hiding-place sketched with such charm and

accuracy by the veteran Australian novelist, "Rolf Boldrewood." Here in the Blue Mountains and amongst the adjacent ranges can be found many a gully, broadening in the centre and well supplied with water and pasturage for the imprisoned stock, yet so enclosed by lofty precipices that its sole obscure track of ingress would prove almost impossible for an outsider to discover. Even so late as the rush to the New South Wales gold-fields in the fifties, many such gullies still existed that had never been officially surveyed and whose very existence was indeed unsuspected; so that the cattle-lifters and bush-rangers of that exciting epoch found excellent places of retreat and concealment after the perpetration of their outrages. I have been told that the actual hidden ravine, so graphically described by the novelist, has been identified with the Capertee Valley, which lies not many miles to the north of Govett's Leap.

Yet another remarkable view is gained by crossing Narrow Neck, the rocky isthmus on the southern side of the Mountains that connects the platform with an almost detached bluff, and at the same time divides the huge wooded bowl of the Jamieson Valley from the partially cleared Kanimbla Valley to westward. Leaving the pleasant shady groves around the Katoomba Falls, and with them the presence of picnic parties and stray paper bags, the bands of cooeeing "kiddies" and other inherent charms of a tourist-ridden beauty-spot, one passes through a belt of sandy gum-tree scrub, till one is far removed from the madding crowd of trippers, who seldom seem inclined to wander far afield from their accustomed haunts. Ere long one reaches and crosses the natural rocky bridge, over which a rude track leads onward till one finally gains the vast salient promontory that juts out from the platform to the south-west. The view on either hand is superb,

for on one side extends the glorious expanse of the Jamieson Valley, with Mount Solitary rising in lonely grandeur from its endless forests; whilst to westward lies the Kanimbla Valley, dotted here and there with a few homesteads and backed by the broad line of the main Dividing Range of Australia. From this great projecting bluff, whereon we stand, proceeds the one and only route to Mount Solitary, which is reached by a track leading through the Bush, past a small but conspicuous crag called the "Ruined Castle," whose crest uprises in the midst of the surrounding wilderness of grey-green eucalypts. But any written description of the scenery of the Blue Mountains must of necessity sound feeble and jejune, for so much of its eccentric but surpassing splendour is due to the brilliant sunshine, the gay colouring of sandstone cliffs and cloudless sky, the soft melting tints of the interminable forests at our feet and to the presence of the azure mist that wraps the distant heights and vistas like some wondrous veil of celestial texture and hue.

The flora of the Blue Mountains is naturally of great interest to the botanist, though in the hot dusty months of February and March I found comparatively few of the plants in bloom. Generally speaking, the vegetation on this table-land is very similar in its character to that of the scrub-lands of Port Jackson, though at this elevation there exist many flowering plants that are not to be found in the coastal belt. I was much interested in noting many clumps of the waratah (of course not in bloom at this season), which is supposed to be strictly protected in the Government reserves of this region. The absurdly named "Wild Parsley" (*Lomatia silaifolia*), which is closely related to the waratah, was everywhere fairly common, and is a tall graceful plant with deeply indented leaves and spikes of cream-coloured blossoms, not unlike those

of a spiræa. There was also the elegant little heath-leaved Dillwynnia (*D. ericifolia*), which grew in abundance on Narrow Neck, an aromatic shrub with small orange and yellow flowers. Two species of Australian Grevillea I also found in bloom—the *G. acanthera*, a showy-looking bush with thorny leaves and spikes of bright mauve blossoms, and the *G. laurifolia*, which bears broad thick leaves and heads of handsome dark crimson flowers; of these, the *acanthera* seemed to thrive in the marshy spots, whilst the latter grew creeping on the dry soil in the sandy areas. The most striking plant in bloom was perhaps the beautiful “Mountain Pine,” (*Persoonia pinifolia*), a heath-like low-growing shrub (and a member of an Australian family of plants called familiarly “Geebungs”), with long spikes of bright yellow flowers and with foliage of an exquisite golden-green tint. Everywhere could be observed the highly ornamental, if somewhat coarse, tassels of the Honey-flower (*Lambertia formosa*), which seems to bloom during the greater part of the year, and its gaudy red flowers always supply a welcome note of colour. As I have already stated, the plants in all the Government reserves are at least nominally protected, though I rather doubt if so tempting a prize as a waratah in bloom would always escape the marauding hand of a Sydney tripper, even under fear of the ten-pound penalty, which is duly announced from many a notice-board in the neighbourhood of the Katoomba and Leura Falls. Of course it is absolutely impossible to carry out all these excellent regulations over so vast a space, though doubtless the foresters and paid officials do all they can to check wanton destruction and vandalism. And that the action of the Government has been at least partially successful can be clearly seen in the luxuriant masses of splendid ferns around the falling waters, which have certainly been saved from extirpation by the vigilance of the custodians.

But it is a hard and thankless task all the world over, to save and protect what is the heritage of all from the destructive tendencies of the few.

Undoubtedly the chief of the many excursions to be made in and around the Blue Mountains is the drive to the Jenolan, or Fish River Caves, which are by road over fifty miles from Katoomba, though they are barely half that distance if the traveller follows the bridle-path from Nelly's Glen across the Kanimbla Valley to the south-west. The motor car has now rendered this trip easy of accomplishment, so that it is no longer a lengthy and fatiguing experience. Obtaining a seat in a fine "Itala" car, I left the excellent Carrington Hotel at Katoomba early one fine hot morning towards the close of February. We first sped rapidly over the fifteen miles of the level main road that runs beside the railway line, till we reached Mount Victoria, which is the most westerly of the resorts on this mountain playground. On our way thither we passed Medlow Bath, a long rambling hotel, with a theatre, an art gallery and a number of other attractions, for which the visitor has to pay in a rather heavy tariff; but the hotel's position is delightful, being placed on the lip of the precipice overlooking the Kanimbla Valley and commanding lovely views. Blackheath, an ugly straggling place, that was the headquarters of the convict gangs of pioneer labourers a century ago, is passed some four miles farther on; and thence we reached Mount Victoria, in which locality the enterprising builder has not wrought such havoc as he has accomplished at Leura and Katoomba. We halted here for a few moments, and thence proceeded towards Mount Piddington, where, our road abruptly leaving the plateau, the car began to descend by a succession of marvellous, not to say alarming, gradients, to the

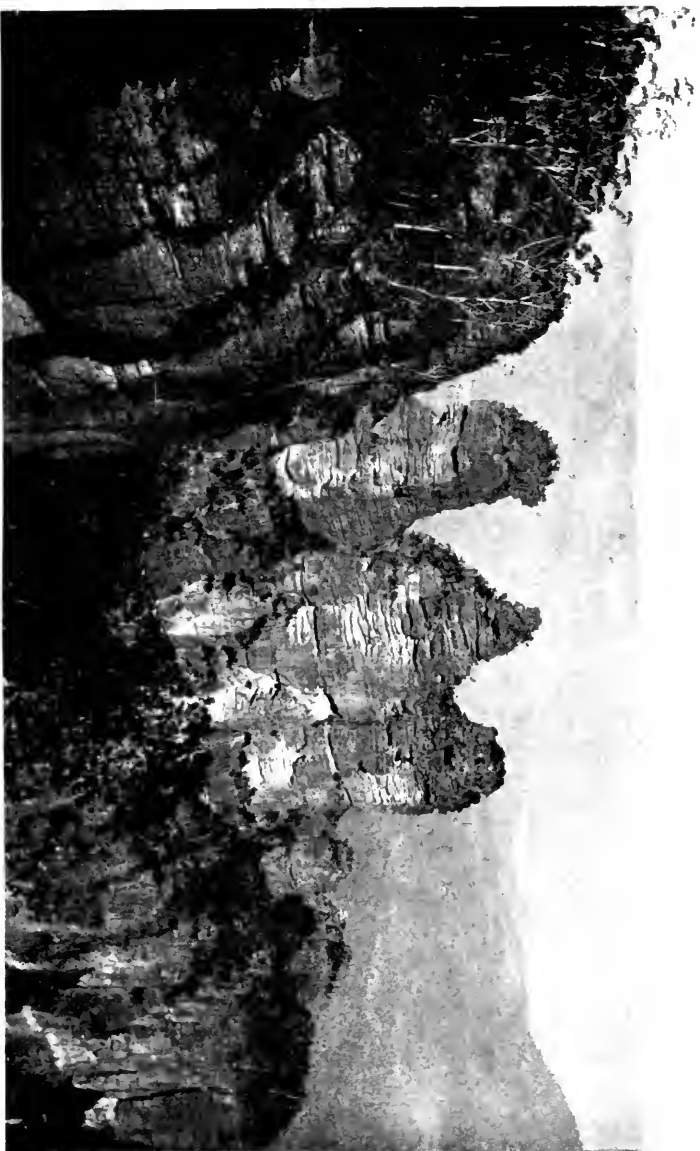
plain below. Once we had reached the lower level, we had Mount Piddington with its sheer walls of sandstone towering more than a thousand feet above our heads; whilst to our right the bold projecting bluff of Mount York stood out valiantly, so that on its summit we could descry the white obelisk, which marks the farthest point attained by the pioneers Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson in their historic expedition of 1813. Naturally this gleaming white monument on Mount York shows as a most conspicuous landmark, and it can be distinguished as a shining speck against the sky from immense distances in this rarified atmosphere. Having gained the level, we struck off from the main road to Bathurst, not far from the old-world-looking township of Hartley, with its shingle roofs and tumble-down gabled cottages all sizzling beneath a merciless sun. Having crossed the Cox River—in this dry season a mere succession of muddy pools—we started to climb the opposite heights of the Great Dividing Range by a series of twistings and turnings almost as sharp as those whereby we had descended at Mount Piddington. On reaching the crest of the range we obtained a superb view of the whole length of the Blue Mountain platform, from Lawson in the far east to Mount York just behind us, with the Kanimbla Valley to serve as a picturesque foreground, with its many farms and open pastures amidst the half-cleared gum-forests. Henceforward our course lay through virgin Bush, with scarcely a clearing, nothing but a succession of gum-trees studding the dusty arid soil. Indeed the intense dryness of the earth was most noticeable; there was scarcely a green plant or even a green leaf to be seen, nothing but grey gums and burnt-up grasses, for we were now in the last weary stage of the long exhausting Australian summer, which in 1913 proved an exceptionally hot and trying one for New South Wales.

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A halt was next called at a wayside hotel, known as Half-way House from its being at equal distance both from Mount Victoria and the Jenolan Caves, and here we were all expected to alight and to devour tea and scones, though we had breakfasted barely two hours previously. Having swallowed this unnecessary repast, off we started again, and continued to ascend until we reached our highest point in the midst of the forests, more than five thousand feet above sea-level. From this spot we began to go downhill in broad curves, passing through a "magnificent monotony" of deep gullies and rocky hillocks that were clothed with a seemingly endless growth of grey gum-trees. Bush fires at no great distance made the air heavy and pungent with odorous smoke, and helped to raise the temperature of the air, which was already more than pleasantly warm on this fine summer's day. I must say I thoroughly appreciated my experience, for it was all typical of Australia: the endless grey Bush; the exhilarating sense of space and sunlight; the tawny soil, looking so old, so weary and so parched; the limitless panorama of featureless rocks and ranges, all thick-covered with the eternal eucalypts that so love and revel in the hot Australian sunshine:

"For the gum-tree brave was born
Beneath Australian skies,
In Australia's earliest morn,
And knows that its own bright Sun,
When the long dark hours are done,
Will again in the East arise."

About three hours after leaving Katoomba, we reached our goal, the woody valley of the Jenolan Creek; but before drawing up in front of the Government Rest House, our car had first to pass beneath a huge natural archway of massive limestone rock, which seemed to block the entrance of the narrow gorge at this point. Above the lower cavity, through



The Three Sisters

which the roadway has been constructed, appears another curious natural hole in the sheer cliff overhead, which is known equally by the names of the Carlotta Arch and the Devil's Window. The Rest House itself, a long stone-built erection, with red-tiled gabled roofs and a lengthy verandah, nestles in a hollow of this deep ravine and offers a most inviting appearance. Here tourists are received and boarded at a charge of ten shillings a day, the accommodation and fare being remarkably good, when the remoteness of the place is taken into consideration. During the summer season the entrance-hall and long verandah of the Jenolan Hotel offer a most animated scene about midday, which is the usual hour both for the arrival and departure of visitors, practically all of whom travel nowadays by motor car hither, the old coaches having been wholly superseded by the more modern form of conveyance.

There are altogether over a dozen caves that are open to the inspection of the public, and all these have been made secure with steps and railings, and have also been fitted with electric lighting. There are, however, other caverns that still remain in their original state, but these cannot be examined without special permission from the authorities, who appoint certain guides for this purpose. These celebrated Caves at Jenolan, which constitute one of the show-sights of Australia and are ranked amongst the finest of their kind in the world, are said to have been first discovered in the fifties by mounted policemen, who had tracked hither some bush-rangers or cattle-lifters that had made their headquarters in these immense limestone caves, in what was at that time practically an inaccessible valley. The "Nettle" and the "Arch" Caves are commonly reputed to have been the first entered by the pursuing police, from which time onward the work of explora-

tion has been proceeding apace. Now that this sequestered valley, with its wonderful natural treasures, can be reached easily by motor car from the Blue Mountains, the number of visitors to Jenolan is annually increasing; the usual plan being to motor over one morning, to sleep the night at the Rest House, and to return on the following afternoon.

For myself, who do not aspire to any knowledge or pretend to any special interest in caves and subterranean sight-seeing, I bought tickets to view the "Lucas" and the "Right Imperial" Caves, which are ranked amongst the largest and most interesting. Certainly they are very wonderful, and many of the sights contained therein are exceedingly lovely, but to my mind the inspection itself proved rather a tedious and dreary business; the crowding of fellow-tourists, the pleasantries of the guides, the intolerable reek of closely packed humanity in low humid passages, the general discomfort of tramping and bending and staring for hours at a stretch, all combined to make me long for a return to the daylight, and even to the hot air outside, though the temperature in the caves was delightfully cool, and could scarcely have exceeded 65° Fahr. Having been duly conducted over two of the principal caves, I felt more than resigned to accept the unseen remainder upon trust, and so, I fancy, would most people. At any rate, four hours of slow progress over muddy paths in dank musty air, and in semi-darkness proved more than sufficient to appease my own curiosity.

These caves are said to be the loftiest and most ornate of their type in existence, and Australians allude with enthusiastic pride to their possession of these geological wonders. I have no desire to protest either against the assertion or the national pride; but as

“ Different men are of different opinions,
Some likes apples, and some likes onions,”

so I mightily prefer churches and castles to dripping underground rocks and bunches of stalactites ; I prefer to view the results of human architecture above ground to those of Nature in the hidden recesses of the earth. At his best man can only name the natural marvels of the caves after man-made things with which he is familiar, and in consequence one is compelled to pass through so-called cathedral chambers, and to inspect organ lofts, gothic pulpits, broken pillars, and endless mementoes of ecclesiastical art in stone. And one is walked up and down and talked to till the spirit waxes faint and weary, the while gazing at bridal veils, maidens' bowers, fairy palaces, Kitty's grottoes, butchers' shops, and a host of other objects and formations with fantastic, absurd, suitable, romantic or commonplace names. The Great Pillar of Jenolan, appearing like a column of highly polished alabaster, is said to have taken thirteen millions of years in its growth ; and here again I have neither reason nor inclination to dispute the statement. This huge stalagmite is certainly wonderful to look upon, and still more wonderful is it to try and attune the human mind to what Walt Whitman calls “ the amplitude of time ” involved in the guide's glib information as to its antiquity. But of all the numerous formations in these caves, whether beautiful or grotesque, I can clearly recall the exceptional elegance of form and dazzling brilliance of the stalactite gothic canopy known as the “ Gem of the West,” of the sheen and purity of snow and ice. So unique is this particular specimen, that I was not surprised to learn that some years ago a ring of Yankee speculators had tried hard to persuade the Government of New South Wales to sell this wonderful limestone efflorescence for a large sum, with the intention of removing this “ Gem of the West ”

to America in order to exhibit its exquisite beauties—of course, for a monetary consideration!—at the World's Fair in Chicago.

As I have already hinted, I am no more a cave-enthusiast than I am a cave-dweller; but one peculiarity I did notice at Jenolan, which is perhaps worth recording. Here, in these Australian caves, the prevailing tints of the stalagmites and stalactites were pure white, cream and brown in various shades, whereas in the far smaller Cheddar Caves, near Bristol, which I had inspected only a few years before, the rose and pink tints in the deposits were most marked throughout. Thus, in richness and variety of colouring, the little Cheddar Caves far surpass, in my opinion, these grander caverns in Australia.

There is an unexpected finale to the long tour of inspection of the Right Imperial Cave, which is generally admitted to be the finest of the Jenolan group. The visitor follows the guide down the long flight of rock-cut steps to the underground water of the Jenolan River, which has of course been here nicknamed the Styx. A further strenuous and rather undignified scramble over sharp muddy rocks alongside the river succeeds until an ice-cold pool of crystal clearness is reached, apparently of no great depth but in reality over six feet deep, so limpid is the water. At the bottom of this pool can be observed many thousands of silver and copper coins, for a recent but highly commendable custom ordains that every traveller to the shores of the Jenolan Styx shall cast a trifle of money into this pool for the benefit of the local hospitals of Bathurst and Lithgow. The coin thrown is aimed at a small flat-topped stalagmite which thrusts up through the water, and at the time of my visit a solitary sixpence lay on its tiny surface. Once a year these coins are collected by the hospital officials, who, on naming the sum total found in the pool, receive an additional donation of an equal amount from the State Treasury. In the

year 1912 about eighty pounds was collected in this highly original manner, so that the hospitals benefited to the tune of one hundred and sixty pounds; and doubtless in the near future, as the wonders of Jenolan serve to attract hither more and more tourists, the amount of this strange charitable contribution will be considerably increased.

It was with a deep sense of relief that I quitted the foul, murky atmosphere of the Caves, to find myself once again in genial heat and glorious sunshine. Jenolan itself is a charming spot, and as its valley has been proclaimed a Government reserve, or natural park, the "sportsman" is not permitted to shoot or snare the native animals, whose interesting habits can to some extent be studied here. At dusk and in the early morning hours, numbers of wallabies¹ may be observed feeding peacefully near the Carlotta Arch; whilst the opossums have grown so tame that they sometimes invade the hotel kitchen in search of food. During the daytime I noticed many parrots, including some of the gorgeous scarlet and green King parrots, perhaps the handsomest of the New South Wales native birds; at sunset, the gum-forests rang with the elfin laughter of the kukaburra or laughing-jackass; and during the night watches I heard at intervals the strange cuckoo-like note of the nocturnal mopoke, or Australian goat-sucker. The rocky gullies and the Bush extend for miles, unbroken by any settlement, and on some of the steep hill-sides near the Rest House rough pathways have been cut for the convenience of visitors. However, the overpowering heat of February put all ideas of long daylight rambles out of my head, for even so early as eight o'clock the sun's rays were beginning to render these close, airless ravines most oppressively warm. The Bush flora, too, was

¹ A marsupial that is closely allied to the kangaroo, but is of much smaller size. They are naturally gentle and make charming pets.

absolutely over, nor could I descry anything in bloom save a few hardy yellow everlasting daisies and some white-blossomed native box-trees. Had it been a cooler time of year I should have been sorely tempted to linger some days in this fascinating sylvan retreat, in order to study the habits of the wild animals and to search for new native plants at my leisure.

VI

TASMANIA

THE island of Tasmania has of recent years been regarded as a playground for Australian tourists and holiday-seekers, who proceed thither in swarms during the hot months that follow Christmastide. This large island, which is nearly the size of Ireland, certainly offers many amenities in the way of scenery, sport and a cool climate. The eastern side of the island is the part mostly frequented by visitors, and the neighbourhood of Hobart in particular. In the centre, the large fresh-water lakes are becoming more and more popular with anglers; whilst the bleak, wet western coast, with its dank forests and its many mining districts, is naturally shunned by the pleasure-seeker.

It cannot be said that the steamer service to Tasmania from the continent during this season of tourist traffic is either adequate or comfortable, whatever route the traveller may adopt. Being at Melbourne, I myself naturally chose to go on board the twin-turbine steamer *Loongana*, which makes the transit to Launceston and *vice versâ* thrice a week, taking about eighteen hours to accomplish the two hundred and seventy-seven miles of distance between the two ports. The *Loongana* is a fair-sized boat of about two thousand five hundred tons and of considerable speed; but when crammed to her utmost capacity with passengers and their baggage, she is anything but a comfortable ship, especially since the waters of Bass Straits are generally more or less agitated. On embarking

at Flinders Street quay on the afternoon of 6th January, I was not over-delighted to find that my berth was placed in a sort of dark unventilated glory-hole, in which were ranged some two or three dozen sleeping-bunks. Nor were my anticipations of a miserable night falsified, for after emerging out of Port Phillip, we found a pretty heavy sea awaiting us once we entered upon "The Rip" outside the harbour heads. For many hours I lay in that gloomy frowsy cockpit, amidst the most distressing of sounds and sights, and glad I was when daylight appeared, so that I could dress and ascend on deck into the bitter cold morning air. In the growing light I perceived we were rapidly making the northern coast of Tasmania, which appeared at first acquaintance to consist almost wholly of dark virgin Bush, which clothed the level lands and the ranges that in their turn gave place to mountains of some five or six thousand feet in height, but possessing no distinction of outline.

It took us nearly four hours to steam slowly up the broad, placid River Tamar, whose scenery is much commended in the Tasmanian guide-books, passing now and again tiny settlements, a few large apple orchards with their dwarfed trees laid out in long geometrical lines, and some tracts of arable land which showed bright yellow against their lugubrious background of everlasting gum-forest. Following the winding course of the estuary, and its still more tortuous channel, we finally came in sight of Launceston, the second city of the island, with a population of some thirty thousand inhabitants. From the river the town presents rather an imposing appearance, with its wharves, its public buildings and its many church towers, and it covers a large area of ground. On a closer acquaintance I found Launceston a good specimen of a busy, well-built, thriving country town, though of

late its shipping trade has greatly declined in favour of its more important rival, Hobart, for the Tamar River is not sufficiently deep to allow the passage of boats of large tonnage. The town has quite a modern aspect, although it owns a few surviving relics of the early days of the old colony of Van Diemen's Land, which was officially rechristened Tasmania in later years with the object of wiping out so many sad and disgraceful memories that clung to the original name. The old convict-built church of St John's, with a quaint clock-tower, still remains, though merely as an appendage to a far more ornate chancel erected not long since ; and no doubt the shabby but interesting old church, with its wooden gallery, will soon be swept away to give place to some grandiose gothic structure in keeping with the present chancel. The little Independent chapel is in a pseudo-classical style of architecture, with the date 1836 over its porch remaining intact ; and at the western end of the town there still exists the former prison, with its massy whitewashed walls, that once guarded the unhappy deported criminals of a bygone era. In addition to these, there still survive several houses of Victorian and some even of earlier date, which tend to give a "homey" atmosphere to the town, so that I sometimes found myself reminded of Hereford, minus its cathedral and close.

Launceston is full of hotels, and during the holiday season these simply swarm with tourists passing to and fro, for nobody stays here for long, but hurries southward toward Hobart. I took up my quarters at one of these hotels, a very noisy and bustling house, with guests arriving and departing and motors hooting at all hours of the day and night. The accommodation was worse than mediocre, and the *cuisine* would have wrecked the digestion of a pirate, yet the minimum charge for this inferior hospitality was twelve shillings and sixpence a day.

The chief if not the only sight of Launceston is the Cataract Gorge, which lies a little to the west of the town and can easily be reached by electric tram. The Gorge has now been declared a public reserve, or natural park, of which a portion has been skilfully converted into botanical gardens. Through a steep rocky valley of basaltic formation the River Esk rushes in a series of foaming eddies, that during times of flood offer a truly impressive spectacle. An iron bridge, of which the citizens of Launceston seem quite unreasonably proud, spans the Esk at the entrance of the Gorge, where it opens on to the tidal Tamar. At this point the visitor enters a small gateway, and at once finds himself walking along a narrow but cleverly engineered pathway that follows the natural curves of the valley, now being cut out of the solid rock and now carried by wooden bridges across a series of encountering ravines. Below us the Esk roars and rushes over its deep bed of boulders, whilst the opposite bank is clothed with the primeval Tasmanian Bush consisting here largely of feathery she-oaks with their drooping foliage interspersed with masses of a tall dark-green shrub, known vaguely by the local name of "box-tree," that at the time of my visit was covered with panicles of pure white blossom. This untouched "splendour of the Bush" contrasted well with the cultivated vegetation on the pathway side of the Gorge, where grew luxuriant Tasmanian tree-ferns and also quantities of flowering shrubs of all kinds, including fuchsias, hydrangeas and foxgloves, all of which had been planted with a lavish but judicious hand.

About a mile above the entrance of the Gorge, the rocky ravine broadens out, and here the Esk is a deep silent pool surrounded by steep wooded hill-sides. Beside the pool are shady lawns and a tea-house, which is managed by the



Cataract Gorge



Hobart and Mount Wellington

municipality, wherein good refreshments at very moderate prices can be obtained ; and that the place is appreciated by the people of Launceston is evident from the numbers who flock hither every fine afternoon to picnic or play on the grass beneath the tall poplars. Beyond this spot begins the Upper Gorge, a wild defile, as fine as many of the famous Swiss ravines, and allowed to remain wholly in its pristine state, save for a narrow pathway that goes zigzagging above the torrent bed for a mile or more, until it reaches the Power Station which supplies the necessary electricity for the town. Of all the various fine Australian reserves I saw, the Cataract Gorge of Launceston was the most interesting in this respect, in that it formed an excellent example of how wild romantic scenery close to a large town can be utilised as a public park without being unduly spoiled or vulgarised in the process.

Of the many Tasmanian wild flowers I unfortunately saw very few, as being the month of January the golden wattles, which form a particular feature in this part of the island, were not in bloom ; so that the only wild flowering shrub that was conspicuous at this season was the white-blossomed box-tree, of which I have already spoken. Of other plants, I noted the "blue-bell," a tall campanula not unlike a large harebell, and some yellow everlasting daisies ; but the most noticeable of all was the fire-weed, a native golden-rod somewhat resembling our own gaudy ragwort, a coarse free-flowering herbaceous plant that clothed the slopes and hollows with sheets of gay yellow. Its local name derives from the circumstance that the fire-weed always springs up in abundance in the clearings made by Bush fires.

One afternoon some friends kindly drove me into the country to see the much-vaunted Cora Lynn, a place-name that is

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familiar to all readers of Kipling's fine poem on the flora of the British Empire :

“ West away from Melbourne dust holidays begin—
They that mock at Paradise woo at Cora Lynn.”

Of the whereabouts of the Paradise alluded to by the poet I am not certain ; but learning of the proximity of Cora Lynn to Launceston, I was naturally anxious to visit it. Our road lay for some miles through an open district of pastures and cornfields, divided into enclosures by stout wooden fences, the highroad being lined with hawthorn hedges that were gay with scarlet hips at this season. Hawthorn, sweet-brier, English willow, gorse and blackberry bushes thrive with more than English luxuriance in these desirable plains of Northern Tasmania, where the early settlers seem almost to have succeeded in eradicating the native vegetation in favour of their beloved and familiar plants of home. The general appearance, therefore, of this portion of the island, which is its most prosperous area, is purely English in its character, save for the presence of the graceful feathery wattle-trees and for a few eucalypts that have been spared here and there. We drove through a long marshy valley watered by a sluggish opaque brook heavily overhung with willows ; and as we passed over a wooden, creaking, picturesque bridge, it became hard indeed to realise we were not crossing some stream in Suffolk or Gloucestershire. No wonder that delightful painter of flowers, and equally delightful writer, Miss Marianne North, was filled with disappointment at this unexpected replica of Old England in the Antipodes, and I myself can easily understand her feelings in this respect. “ The country was not in the least attractive to me,” she writes ; “ it was far too English, with hedges of sweet-brier, hawthorn and blackberry, nettles, docks,

thistles, dandelions ; all the native flowers (if there were any) were burnt up. One lovely flower I heard of, and was taken a long drive to see. It was—a mullein ! ”

After about nine miles of this pseudo-English scenery we suddenly lighted on a cleft in the rolling plain, a small rocky glen of about a quarter of a mile in length, through which ran a clear brawling stream. It was the type of small mountain valley that is familiar to all travellers in Wales or Scotland—just a rocky gash in the landscape spanned by a bridge over a murmuring burn. Yet this was the world-renowned Cora Lynn, sung by the bard of Empire ! We left the carriage to descend the steep bank to the bottom of this diminutive gorge, and I do not think I ever remember to have suffered so acutely from the heat as I did on that sunny afternoon within that tiny enclosed valley. In fact, I felt the power of the sun more in Northern Tasmania than ever I did in Australia, and often thought regretfully of the sun-helmet I had left behind in Sydney. And speaking of heat in Tasmania, the climate of that island is constantly extolled as being “equable.” My own experience may be unusual, but during the month I spent there the thermometer varied from 98° Fahr. to some degrees below freezing-point ; never, indeed, have I felt such enervating steamy heat as at Launceston or suffered from such bitter icy blasts as at Hobart. I daresay it is very healthy, despite these vagaries of temperature, for it is certainly appreciated by the many Australian visitors, especially by the tourists from Queensland, who seem to revel in the sharp invigorating breezes from the Antarctic Ocean.

It is about a hundred and thirty miles overland from Launceston to Hobart, and it takes about six hours to accomplish this distance by rail. The first portion traversed is not especially interesting, as the line runs through a dull pastoral

region of withered grass and thistles, though there are distant views on either hand of flat-topped mountain ranges, those on the left being Mounts Barrow, Arthur and Glen Lomond ; whilst the long chain of rocky bluffs to the right forms part of the Central Ranges, beyond which are situated the great lakes of the interior. We halted for tea at a lofty station, some sixteen hundred feet above sea-level, named Parrattah, which is one of the few surviving native place-names in use ; Conara, Pateena, Ringarooma, Taranna, Triabunna being also samples of the old aboriginal nomenclature of the island. From Parrattah the railway winds southwards in easy curves downhill towards the fertile valley of the River Derwent and the scenery grows wilder and grander. There are fine views of massive mountains and the line itself passes above steep slopes gay with yellow fire-weed and white box-tree in full bloom. It was a scorching hot day on which I left Launceston and with a furious warm northerly gale, like a furnace blast, blowing over the island and bringing destruction upon the apricot and apple orchards, especially in the neighbourhood of Hobart. A little to the south of Parrattah we passed alongside the curious swampy Lake of Tiberias, at this time a huge brown circular expanse of reeds, over which many hawks were hovering. At Bridgewater we crossed in the dusk the broad estuary of the Derwent and here I obtained my first glimpse of the noble expanse of Hobart Harbour. It was late when we reached the station, from which I made my way on foot to the comfortable commercial house of Heathorn's Hotel, where for ten shillings a day, in the height of the tourist season, I was made very comfortable during my visit.

Hobart, formerly known as Hobart Town, is the oldest colonial city in Australasia after Sydney, having been founded so early as 1803, and it is most decidedly one of the show-

places of the world. The town itself is grandly situated on a superb harbour of great depth and in the midst of beautiful natural surroundings. Behind the town rises Mount Wellington, which though only a little over four thousand feet high, has a nobler and more characteristic form than most of the Australian mountains of greater elevation. With its broad winding haven, its shipping and quays, its substantial stone buildings and the precipitous slopes of Mount Wellington to form a background, I have no hesitation in saying that Hobart owns by far the most striking appearance as well as the grandest site of any Australian city. Nor with its many beauties can Hobart complain of neglect by the people of Australia, for it is here that the great tourist wave may be said to concentrate and break every summer. It is quite the most "touristy" place I have seen during the month of January, which is the height of the season, when the sleepy old town—"Slobart," as it has been irreverently nicknamed by *The Sydney Bulletin*—wakes from its annual slumbers and grows alive with the irruption of pleasure-seekers, for whose benefit and convenience the streets resound with the clatter of brakes and hooting of motor cars. For all congregate here and conscientiously visit the local lions of scenery; and quite right they are to do so, for few places can offer finer or more varied attractions of mountain, sea and forest, than the neighbourhood of the capital of Tasmania.

The town itself is so quaint and unpretentious, that even in England it would be accounted of an old-fashioned type, whilst the almost complete absence of corrugated iron roofs—that eyesore which ruins the picturesque aspect of every town and village in Australia—is a great relief to the eye. Roofs of shingles or red tiles seem to predominate here, and the many massive stone houses, built by convict labour some two or three

generations ago, give a general appearance of British comfort and solidity. The public buildings are ample and handsome, and I was greatly pleased with the Anglican cathedral of St David's, of good proportions and built of dressed stone, which is wholly free from the garish ornamentation that disfigures the large metropolitan churches of Sydney and Melbourne. The many stained-glass windows of the interior too are extremely beautiful, and being all of harmonious design and colouring produce a most restful effect.

Both in the town and its many suburbs are innumerable gardens, all of them well stocked with the herbaceous flowers and plants that we especially cultivate at home; and as for geraniums, I never saw, even on the shores of the Mediterranean, any to equal in luxuriance and hue those of Hobart. The prodigality of scarlet and white and pink blossoms everywhere was really wonderful, and in some places the climbing ivy-leaved geranium hung in dense masses of carmine over the edge of the rocks above the waters of the harbour. Outside the town the fields were gay with quantities of the scabious, an imported plant, whose handsome flowers showed bright tints of crimson, pink and mauve.

One of the most popular of the many day-trips from Hobart is to the village of New Norfolk, beloved of Australian artists, in the upper reaches of the Derwent, which is reached by steamer, the expedition taking practically the whole day. For a couple of hours the boat steams up the broad winding harbour, with its densely wooded slopes descending to the water's edge; and then after passing through the swivel-bridge at Bridgewater it enters the Derwent, and slowly proceeds up the river, past low marshy banks covered with reeds and tea-tree scrub. From time to time we obtain a glimpse of the summit of Mount Wellington towering above the lower ranges. Following the

twists and turns of the river, we finally arrive at the little township of New Norfolk, with English willows and tall Lombardy poplars reflected in the still waters of the Derwent, and with its many apple orchards and hop gardens sweltering in the noon-tide sunshine. The presence of the hop vines, which are here grown on long strings suspended from wooden cross poles, gives an additional touch of English environment to the landscape, which is studded with prosperous farm-houses of a type one associates at home with the rural districts of Kent or Sussex. On landing, luncheon was served at the Bush Hotel, a charming old-fashioned inn built in Regency days, full of airy rooms and broad sashed windows, and with a long balcony commanding a splendid view of river and orchards, and of farms peeping out of bosky surroundings. The hotel had an ideal garden, which seemed one glowing mass of flowers—hollyhocks, roses, poppies, pansies, larkspurs, eschscholtzias, lilies, intermingled with huge bushes of blossoming New Zealand veronicas, white, mauve and purple. A mulberry of great age and a few glossy-leaved apricot-trees afforded some relief of green to the glorious display of flowering plants of varied colours.

After luncheon we went for a drive in a public four-in-hand brake some seven miles up the valley of the Derwent, ostensibly to inspect a Government salmon-hatchery (of which the authorities are very proud and sanguine as to the results), but in reality to enjoy the air and the views of the broad valley and the rushing river, which above New Norfolk is full of eddying shallows and therefore no longer navigable. At last we reached the fish-ponds wherein the young salmon fry are reared before being cast under official benediction into various Tasmanian lakes and streams, where it is asserted they will soon become acclimatised and will multiply. There was next to

nothing of interest to see, but the place itself was a charming sylvan spot, surrounded by lawns of smooth shaven turf and with a babbling brook at no great distance, that was buried deep in native ferns and shadowed by tall English chestnut-trees.

The chief excursion from Hobart is however up Mount Wellington, whose massive form acts as a screen to the city to westward, and whose wooded flanks appear marvellously clear in the early morning light. I was glad to note that the majority of Australian tourists still express a preference for the horse brakes, which are here usually drawn by a team of five ; and it certainly is far more pleasant and tranquil to ascend thus behind horse-flesh than to fly up the steep dusty road in a noisy motor car. Franklin Square, which is the chief public rendezvous in the city, presents a very lively appearance each morning at the hour of the departure of the numerous coaches bound for Fern Tree and The Springs on the mountain-side. Perched aloft on one of these coaches, I was able to see the scenery of the lower slopes far better than from a motor car or private carriage. It is a stiff uphill pull, but the average five-in-hand generally does the first stage so far as Fern Tree well within the hour. Here a halt is called, and we descend in order to drink a glass of Tasmanian cider, light and not too sweet, and then to visit the Fern Tree Bower, which latter is one of the Meccas of the Australian tourist in the island of "Tassie," as it is sometimes familiarly called. The Bower consists of a group of tall fern-palms about twelve feet in height, beneath which are set rustic tables that are much patronised by engaged couples feasting on raspberries and cream, the chief delicacy of Tasmania. It is rather a vulgarised spot, but if the visitor will only have the patience to leave the Bower and the banqueting sweethearts behind him, and follow the path that

leads hence round the contour of the mountain above the broad Huon Road, he will soon be revelling in some of the finest scenery in the world. For the track in its windings passes over gorges deep in palm-ferns, some of these being veritable giants with fronds nine or ten feet long; and at every point the pedestrian will obtain wonderful changing views, as he looks down and beyond the slopes of gum-forest towards the city and harbour. I myself pursued this level track for some miles, and in solitude, for the average tourist prefers the Fern Bower and its enticements to the exertion of walking to enjoy scenery. Everywhere around me were the gum-trees, chiefly of the peppermint and stringy-bark varieties; whilst of the other trees, the celery-topped pine, which flourishes here, is said to be peculiar to the slopes of Mount Wellington.

Being late summer, the flowers were mostly past, but in their place were many plants bearing gay-coloured berries, red, white and pale blue; and one small trailing vine, something like bryony, was distinguished by large fruits, nearly the size of a cherry, of a bright purple hue. The beautiful sweet-scented native laurel was over, but I was delighted with the so-called Tasmanian Lilac, a tall shrub not unlike lilac in its manner of growth, that bore a profusion of pure white labiate flowers with deep purple markings, one of the most elegant of flowering shrubs I have ever seen.

From Fern Tree it is another hour's drive on a good broad road, or a half-hour's scramble up a steep mountain path cut through the Bush, to The Springs. Here the road ends at a spot where the Government has built a comfortable little hotel, where anyone may stay for the sum of eight shillings a day, and enjoy bracing mountain air, good plain food and a superb panorama of Hobart Harbour and its many contorted capes and peninsulas lying below. Immediately beneath the hotel, and

forming a lovely foreground to the more distant views of sea and promontories, stretch the forest-clad slopes, with gigantic eucalypts uprising from a stony soil, wherein the bronze-red foliage of the young springing gum-trees appears very conspicuous.

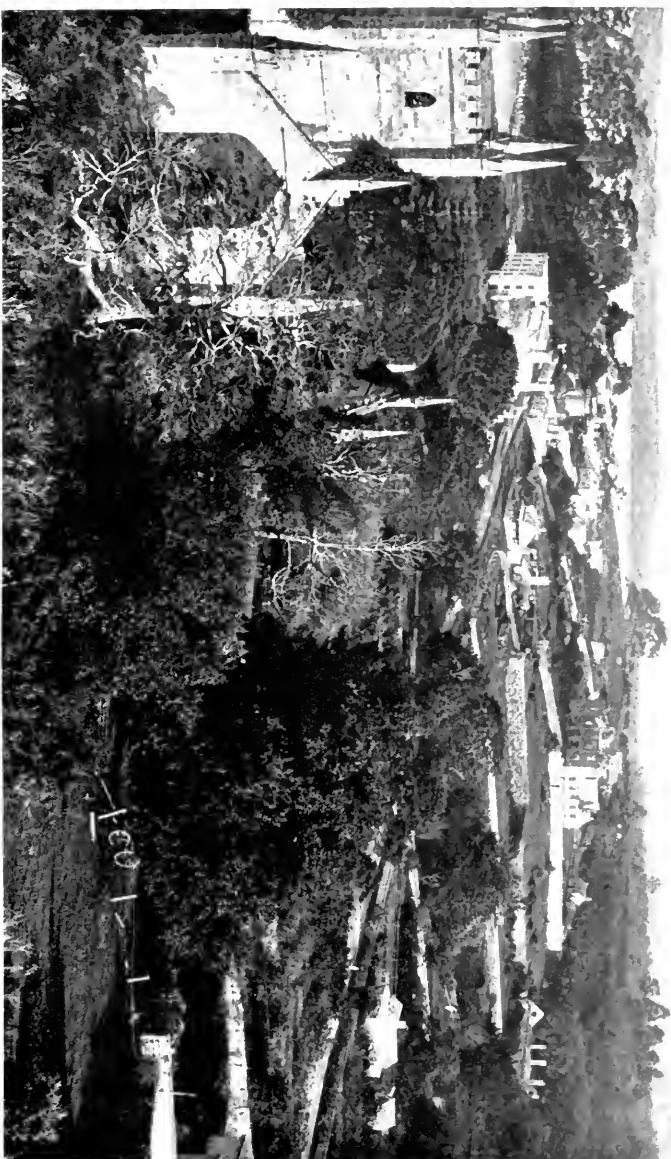
The Springs Hotel stands about sixteen hundred feet below the "Pinnacle," the extreme summit of the mountain, and the steep pathway leading thither is full of interest to the botanist. It is a lovely walk, but upward progress is slow, for each moment one wants to turn round to feast the eyes upon the widespread views below. At a certain point in the track there is an excellent view of the precipices known as the Organ Pipes, a tall basaltic rocky spur that makes its nomenclature an obvious if not a highly original one. At this altitude I found many flowers of interest, including the curious tall white Tasmanian Lily, though the latter was as yet only in bud. Parenthetically, I may remark here that the Tasmanian flora and fauna are almost identical with those of the southern parts of Australia ; indeed it could scarcely be otherwise, seeing that this large island is in reality a chunk of the continent that has in distant ages been severed from the mainland by the volcanic action that created the intervening Bass Straits. Considering the inclemency of its climate, with its long, cold, wet winters, it seems odd to think that parrots and cockatoos, which we at home always associate with the tropics, should be able to breed and flourish in so ungenial a clime—or at least did flourish and increase, until the British settler came along with poison and gun to try and exterminate the native fauna, and to replace it by useful selected specimens from Europe, such as the rabbit, the fox, the sparrow and the starling.

Perhaps the most interesting of the longer excursions from Hobart is that to the ruins of the former penal settlement of

Port Arthur, which is a small inlet of Tasman's Peninsula, on the south-eastern side of the harbour. Leaving Hobart wharf early one bright morning by the little steamer *Cartela*, we sailed for over three hours on a tortuous course, passing capes, beaches, sandbanks, rocks and islands that stud these waters in endless succession. We first sailed down the harbour, and then crossed Storm Bay, of evil repute to mariners of a bygone generation. The scenery is beautiful, with its yellow sandy beaches nestling between dark basaltic cliffs and with the continuous lines of forest that approach the shore; but the complete absence of all historical interest or legendary lore in the places we flit past leaves an ill-defined but very real gap in our sense of enjoyment of their natural beauties. In many places I was vividly reminded of the lochs of the Highlands, with their clear waters and their bosky islets and promontories; but here on the Tasmanian coast there is shed no glamour of the mighty past, there are no romantic tales of Walter Scott or legends of the Young Chevalier to add a touch of human interest to each exquisite scene. At the best, there is only the ugly story of convict days, not yet a century old; and the equally shameful tale of the barbarous extirpation of the uncivilised aborigines of Van Diemen's Land by their civilised and Christian supplanters. Behind us, to the west, stretches the long, low, broken form of Bruny Island, which is separated from the mainland by D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Its melancholy area is still mostly covered with dense Bush, and it remains almost uninhabited; yet here on this isle, prior to the days of colonisation, dwelt one of the most powerful tribes of Tasmanian savages, of whose number the last surviving member, the woman Truganini, died so recently as 1875, when her skeleton, with the characteristic taste of the callous settlers, was placed like that of a monkey in the museum at Hobart for the casual visitor to inspect or

quiz. It seems indeed strange to reflect that less than a century ago these wooded silent shores of Bruni Island were fairly closely inhabited by a vigorous if uncultured race, who once a year regularly swam the three intervening miles of the ice-cold Channel in order to gather a winter's rations among the lakes of the interior of the mainland. With the women in the centre and with the males swimming in a protecting circle around them, the whole tribe thus made its annual migration; and in due course returned to Bruni in like manner, bringing home their spoils of game and fresh-water fish. And now not one of this tribe is left; if you happen to feel inquisitive as to the appearance of this ancient but extinct human race you can to some extent satisfy your curiosity in the Hobart Museum, where they have preserved some portraits of these people as well as the afore-mentioned anatomy of poor Princess Truganini.

About noon the *Cartela* anchored at the little township of Taranna, on the shore of Tasman's Peninsula, a peninsula that is a strangely jagged, contorted, sprawling piece of the world's formation, to whose eccentricities of outline only an enlarged map of Tasmania could do full justice. At Taranna we managed to engage a two-horse buggy, and set off to drive the necessary seven miles across the Bush to Port Arthur. And a very lovely drive it was, through the gum-forest, whose open glades were gay with multitudes of flowers despite the lateness of the season. The ferns too were exquisite and of great variety, ranging from tiny delicate specimens to the giant tree-ferns, that here and there in boggy places thrust up their great fronds above the surrounding scrub. Our course lay alongside the old wooden rail-track, now almost destroyed or else overgrown by the encroaching vegetation, which was made by the unhappy convicts who felled the timber near Port Arthur,



Port Arthur

and thence wheeled it in trucks to the wharf at Taranna for shipment. Here and there, some of the old sleepers could still be espied half hidden by the veil of tangled plants. In one place we crossed a valley where a large Bush fire was raging fiercely, and saw the devastation already accomplished, which extended to many hundreds of acres on either side of the road.

After an hour's drive up and down hill at length I espied Port Arthur in the distance, a lovely pale blue inlet enclosed by bosky headlands, and with the mysterious Dead Man's Isle, the old cemetery of the convict settlement, sleeping on its calm surface. Far away to eastward could be discerned Cape Pillar, falling sheer to the ocean, with its tall basaltic columns looking like some colossal earthquake-riven temple. Below us, in a valley that was filled with leafy English trees of mature growth and was gay with little gardens of fuchsias and geraniums, lay the small village now known officially as Carnarvon, around which were spread the various ruined buildings of the old penal establishment, that has been described with such terrible accuracy by Marcus Clarke in his popular novel, "For the Term of his Natural Life." One first reaches the church, a large gothic structure built by some nameless convict architect on what is known as the collegiate plan, for it has no nave but very wide transepts as well as a square tower, now bereft of its stone spire, which the novelist Anthony Trollope admired so recently as 1872. It is heavily draped—walls, pinnacles and tower—with festoons of shining English ivy, and, except to the experienced ecclesiologist, it has every appearance of some genuine medieval ruin—perhaps of an abbey of Thelema, founded centuries ago by Rabelaisian settlers in the great southern land. Within the crazy walls are verdant daisy-starred lawns, and in its precincts many an English garden

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flower still runs wild. A quarter of a mile to the east, and nearer to the water, stands the prison itself, consisting of cells, hospital, penitentiary, a well-preserved circular powder magazine and a number of other appurtenances necessary to a large penal settlement, which, even so late as the seventies, in its declining days contained over five hundred male prisoners. These extensive buildings are nearly all now in a tottering condition, which is due not so much to the lapse of time (for they have been abandoned less than forty years), as to the destruction wrought by an outbreak of fire, which completely gutted them. One building has been restored and converted into a sort of town hall for the convenience of the present inhabitants ; but it cannot be long before the stone skeletons of the still standing houses will collapse and be levelled with the ground ; and perhaps it is as well it should be so, for all the memories that cling to these stones savour of inhuman crime and official cruelty, of bitter sorrow and of loathsome disease. Whilst, however, the main buildings of the prison stand on the verge of final collapse (so that notices are affixed to the walls to warn visitors of the risk they run in entering them), the various houses and cottages of the former Commandant and his many subordinates remain for the most part in good repair, and being well constructed of good material by capable convict hands, they are likely to survive many generations of the present families of Carnarvon who now inhabit them. The Commandant's residence is a fine old-fashioned house with an ornate gateway, and a wrought-iron arch to hold a large lamp ; whilst close behind it stands the modest cottage which still owns some degree of notoriety as having been the temporary abode of that excitable Irish patriot, Smith O'Brien, whose fiery soul fretted its tenement of clay for some years in this distant corner of the British Empire.

On the grassy sward below the penitentiary, which was once a salt marsh that has been reclaimed by enforced convict labour from the tidal flats, flourish fine shady English trees, including a long avenue of oaks with their branches intertwining overhead. In this pleasant verdant meadow a number of the young men of Port Arthur—I crave pardon, of Carnarvon!—were playing a cricket match. The merry shouting and the white-flannelled figures somehow accorded ill with the solemn atmosphere of the derelict place, over which hangs a pall of melancholy which is very oppressive. Yet all is wonderfully picturesque and the colouring is exquisite: green grass and trees, the soft calm blue waters of the bay, and the still imposing ruined buildings, that have been calcined by the sun and by fire to a lovely shade of warm orange-pink.

In the middle distance, on the surface of the placid bay, one sees Dead Man's Isle, a steep sylvan hillock wherein repose in the perfect equality demanded by King Death many former inhabitants of Port Arthur: men of rank and authority, ignorant fellows, political patriots, educated persons, even children of tender years. For across the water uprises the rocky spit of land known as Point Puer, wherein the enlightened days of the nineteenth century hundreds of poor little wights, many of them not even in their teens, were immured and brought into close contact with all the unspeakable horrors of the rigid system that the novels of Marcus Clarke and of Charles Reade did so much to expose. Indeed it was from this very promontory that on one occasion two poor little human creatures actually committed suicide by throwing themselves, closely bound together, into the deep waters below, preferring the oblivion of death to the present horrors and brutalities of their awful surroundings. This odious establishment at Point Puer was happily swept away along before

the penal settlement at Port Arthur ceased to exist ; and it is reported that it was by a special command from Queen Victoria that the shameful building at Point Puer was completely razed and removed, so that nothing now remains for the inquisitive stranger to inspect except a few underground cellars amongst the rocks

I turned my back on the beautiful but baleful spot in the mellow evening sunshine, and drove through the luxuriant Bush and past masses of pink, crimson and white native heaths towards Eagle-hawk Neck, which also owns many sinister memories of convicts and of attempted dashes for freedom. This Neck is merely a narrow isthmus that unites Tasman's Peninsula with the mainland, and it was, and is, the sole means of egress from Port Arthur by way of dry land. In the old convict days, therefore, this vulnerable spot was kept strongly guarded by sentries who were posted at short intervals ; and these human watchmen were assisted in their task by a number of fierce mastiffs that were chained at no great distance apart on the narrowest point of the Neck. For these canine guardians a fixed ration of one pound of meat and one pound of bread was allotted daily ; and it was generally deemed impossible for any escaping felon, even if he had managed to elude the sentries, to pass the cordon of mastiffs as well. And should the obstinate runaway endeavour to swim across to the mainland, there were boats in readiness with armed watchers, to say nothing of the sharks, which, it is said, were also fed daily from the shore, in order that they too might be pressed into the service of defeating the efforts of the convicts to escape. In consequence, when any convict did manage to break away from the gangs at Port Arthur, which was neither very difficult nor very infrequent, the unhappy man had merely to face the choice of starvation in the inhospitable Bush or of ultimate

surrender to the prison authorities, with the prospect of subsequent punishment by the lash, or short rations, or the dark cell, as might befit his particular case. Genuine instances of successful escape from the military tyranny of Port Arthur were under these circumstances of the greatest rarity ; but readers of Marcus Clarke's fascinating though lugubrious novel will remember the account of the wonderful exploits of the convict Devine, and the story of his hiding himself within the cliffs of the Blow-hole, which forms the chief natural sight of Eagle-hawk Neck.

I had one interesting experience whilst staying at Hobart, and that was a morning's visit to the private zoological garden of a well-known resident, Mrs Roberts of " Beaumaris," a villa on the southern outskirts of the city. I was very kindly received by the lady of the house, who took me on a round of inspection of her animals during the feeding hour, and a very entertaining sight it proved. The little zoo itself only occupies a couple of acres of ground, but the many animals and birds contained here are all kept scrupulously clean, and they seemed perfectly healthy in appearance, nor was there any unpleasant smell. Their special interest to myself lay in the circumstance that this private zoo is well supplied with the Tasmanian fauna, of which Mrs Roberts possesses an expert knowledge. Amongst these, the so-called Tasmanian Tiger is perhaps the most remarkable, as it is also the largest. This strange animal is still to be found in a wild state in the damp, impenetrable forests of the western side of the island, but it has now become very scarce and also very shy ; nor is the species likely to survive long the untiring war declared upon its existence by the pastoralists of the west, for the tiger is carnivorous and a sheep-destroyer, though he is not in the least

dangerous to man, except perhaps when at bay. The Tasmanian Tiger, or wolf, as it is also sometimes called (*Thylacerus cyanocephalus*), which is one of the most ancient animals left in the world, is a strange ungainly creature, about the size of a mastiff, with close and crisp fur of a tawny grey. Across the hinder part of the back and on the long tail appear several dark-coloured stripes, whence no doubt the name of "tiger" derives. It is a marsupial, and though it goes on four legs, yet its hind limbs are bent back somewhat in the manner of those of the kangaroo. There were two specimens of this extraordinary beast preserved here, a male and a female, of which the former was a splendid fellow in appearance, being in good condition; and he seemed, moreover, of a tolerably friendly disposition. The Latin epithet given to the Tasmanian Tiger evidently refers to the unwieldy dog-like head, which contrasts oddly with the slim proportions of the body.

In the adjoining den were kept a pair of Tasmanian Devils, rather jolly little creatures, not unlike small black Tamworth pigs, but with longer legs and less bristly coats. The Tasmanian Devil (*Sarcophilus ursinus*) is a powerful but sluggish animal, and its canine teeth can make it more than a match for any dog. Its jet black fur is distinguished by a white horseshoe mark on the chest. This creature is far more common than the tiger, and is still found in all parts of the island, where specimens are occasionally caught in traps by the farmers, who have a mortal horror of this queer but not unpleasing animal. Until recently all these captured devils were despatched at once, but now there is a regular market for this interesting marsupial, which is constantly in request for the zoos both of Australia and of Europe. The devil is also carnivorous, and the pair I saw tussled fiercely for the raw meat that was

thrown to them, tearing it into strips with their sharp white teeth.

Amongst other zoological rarities were the kea, the mountain parrot of the South Island of New Zealand, a bird that has acquired the evil habit of attacking the settlers' sheep with its broad sharp bill, in order to extract the kidney fat, and has in consequence of its misdeeds been well-nigh extirpated, and perhaps with good reason. It is a large untidy bird with dull brown and green plumage, having more the figure of a buzzard than a parrot. Of course there were kangaroos here, so tame that they came leaping forward to greet their owner and to search our pockets for crusts of bread. There were also some beautiful little phalangers, or gum-tree squirrels, the most delicate and dainty of their race, with long bushy ringed tails and lovely lilac-grey fur and large liquid eyes. Being nocturnal in their habits, the whole family was sleeping heavily in its box, and all squealed and scratched furiously on being disturbed, for I wanted to observe their curious cutaneous membrane that enables these little creatures to fly, or rather to take long leaps, from tree to tree. It was no easy matter to compel the sleepy cross little animals to perform for my benefit ; but at last we succeeded in our efforts. I only wish I had time and space at my command, so as to write more fully concerning this delightful zoo with its many interesting occupants in fur and feather.

My last week spent in Tasmania consisted of a very pleasant visit to a country house not far from the town of Longford, in the northern part of the island. The house was admirably situated on a steep hill above the clear waters of the River Esk, which is here shaded by English willows and thickets of tea-tree. The window frames and fittings of this house had all been brought out from England some eighty years ago, and were

still in serviceable condition. Tasmanian hospitality is proverbial, and it was an interesting experience to participate in the daily life of a Tasmanian family that has resided for nearly a century on the island, and whose name is deeply respected throughout the State. In the main, the existence led here was much the same as that of an English country home, but there were evident a charm and a simplicity that have grown rare in this luxurious and restless age in the Old Country. The old type of Tasmanian squire, too, has been hard hit by the extreme scarcity and dearness of labour, so that these fine old colonial mansions and their pleasure-grounds cannot be kept up nowadays in the style of a previous generation. Yet I found an object-lesson here, for many of ourselves at home will ere long have to face the same exigencies and the same shortage of labour, and will have to adapt our lives to the new conditions involved thereby, or else retire in discomfiture from a changing rural world. Nevertheless, if we can bend to the inevitable and alter our mode of existence in accordance with the democratic spirit of the times, there is no reason why we should be compelled to break our time-honoured continuity with the agricultural life and scenes of our forefathers.

There was a large garden at my host's, well stocked with all the familiar fruits of home, from the apple to the apricot, which in Tasmania grow with a prolific abundance to which we are wholly unaccustomed. For Tasmania is essentially a land of the temperate zone, and the summer visitor to the "Apple Isle" can revel in a profusion of the most luscious fruits from December to March. From the lovely if somewhat neglected gardens there were fine views over the wheat-growing plains of the valley of the Esk, which was bounded to westward by the long line of the central mountains of the island, with

Quamby Bluff to the extreme north-west. Round the house, there was still left a good extent of primeval Bush, full of golden wattles and gums and the handsome blackwood-trees with their vivid green foliage; and very pleasant it was to ramble in the chequered shade of these native forests, and to watch the magpies, the minahs and the many rosella parrots that still dwell in them.

I returned to Sydney direct from Launceston in the *Wakatipu*, an old but seaworthy boat belonging to the fleet of the Union Line. We had a lovely passage down the Tamar, with its monotonous forest scenery, but soon encountered rough wet weather as we approached the Australian coast. I took this somewhat unusual route of return in order to get a glimpse of Eden and Twofold Bay, on the border-line of Victoria and New South Wales, for the *Wakatipu* was advertised to touch at this little-visited but exceedingly picturesque port of call. On the evening of the second day we were entering Twofold Bay, the southern end of which is crowned by a tall fantastic tower, which had been originally erected by the whaling community of a bygone generation for the purpose of signalling. From the steamer's deck this curious building had quite the appearance of a medieval belfry, and gave an old-world character to the landscape. On the south shore of the bay lies the old whaling station, once a place of some importance but of no great value nowadays. The scenery was grand, for the dense forests descended to the shore in unbroken array, whilst behind the Bush rose the mass of the Australian Alps, all of them rounded hills rising one above another in endless succession. The main peak of Mount Kosciusko, the highest mountain of Australia, lay too far to westward to be visible from the decks, but it belongs to the group already described.

As we slowly steamed up the bay, dolphins leaped and played in dozens around our keel, and were most amusing in their antics; they are fast swimmers, and indeed their pace is so great that they are said to be able to outstrip the fastest torpedo boat going at full speed. We duly landed at the wharf below Eden, and were allowed to go ashore for a short time, which I spent in picking up shells on one of the many sandy beaches wherewith the bay abounds. The town of Eden is quite a small place, and differs in no essential respect from any other Australian township of similar size, but it possesses a lovely situation, and when, if ever, the new capital of Federated Australia at Canberra, beyond the enclosing hills, comes into being in earnest, then perhaps Eden will be linked up by a railroad with the infant metropolis.

Leaving Twofold Bay about sunset, by noon next day we were passing the entrance of Botany Bay, and an hour or so later were steaming up the familiar waterway of Port Jackson, so as to berth in Darling Harbour in the heart of commercial Sydney.

VII

NEW ZEALAND

I CAN scarcely tell why, but I had always felt rather prejudiced against a visit to New Zealand, presumably on account of the reiterated praises of its people, its scenery and its resources, which had been dinned in season and out of season into my rather unwilling ears. So, much in the spirit wherein his ignorant countryman condemned beforehand Aristides the Just through weariness at the many reports of his virtues, I started without enthusiasm on my voyage from Sydney to the Happy Isles, where I had only some five weeks of my time to spend.

It was in no very amiable mood, then, that I stepped on board the *Maheno*, which makes the crossing from Sydney to Auckland in about four days, favourable weather in the Tasman Sea permitting. The s.s. *Maheno*, of the Union Steamship Company's fleet, is a capitally appointed boat of five thousand tons, with good service and good food, albeit on the menu one finds such edible curiosities as "assorted lollies" and "golden bucks." The wide expanse of the intervening Tasman Sea bears an evil reputation for storms, yet we were fortunate to meet with seas that were on most days absolutely calm and were never disagreeably rough. It is a dull passage, with no land visible until on the evening of the third day one sights to northward the little group of barren islets known as the Three Kings, and opposite to them the headland of Cape Maria Van Diemen with its revolving light. By consulting

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the map of Australasia, the reader will readily perceive what a curve the Auckland-bound vessels from Sydney have to accomplish before they can sail direct into the harbour of Auckland, which lies on the farther or eastern side of the long, narrow, broken peninsula that juts out into the ocean from the North Island.

Early on the following morning, which was bright and fresh, we were entering the Hauraki Gulf, distinguished by its many islands and rocks, and with the mainland close to us. So far we had hardly seen any sea-fowl since passing Sydney Heads, but here, off the wild rocky coast-line of "the roadless North," there were birds in hundreds following or escorting our ship, from the stately albatrosses and the huge molly-hawks to the sooty mutton-birds and the tiny elegant terns, that flitted like snow-white swallows over the transparent waters, all foam-flecked in a newly risen and invigorating southerly breeze. To our left and in front of us uprose the lofty ranges of Great Barrier Island and of Coromandel, and so near did we sail to the mainland that in places I could perceive the vast forests that are the home of the gigantic kauri pines, which only flourish in this sub-tropical region to the north of Auckland. Now and again we sighted fantastic crags, some of them bearing descriptive names, such as the Sail, the Beehive, etc. Straight ahead stretched the lengthy and singularly graceful form of Rangitoto Island, with its triple peak; and as we approached the mouth of the harbour I could clearly distinguish the dense scrub that clothes the sides of this extinct volcano, which forms one of the most prominent features of every view around Auckland.

By noon the *Maheno* had passed the heads of the harbour, and was soon alongside the wharf. A few minutes later the easy ordeal of the customs examination of the Dominion of

New Zealand had been undergone, and I was hurrying up the steep ascent of Shortland Street, just in time to secure the last available bedroom at what claims with every right to be the best hotel in Australasia, the Grand Hotel. This excellent hostelry stands well above the town, but at no great distance from Queen Street, the city's main artery of traffic; whilst almost next door to the hotel is the Northern Club, and just across the road are the pleasant gardens of Government House, an old-fashioned mansion that was the sole official residence of viceroyalty until the seat of the legislature of the Dominion was removed to Wellington in 1865.

Of Auckland itself, "loneliest, loveliest and last" of British cities (which line I am in honour bound to quote!), I shall say little beyond that it appears to be after a very brief acquaintance a pleasant and prosperous city, in its general aspect and setting recalling Sydney, though naturally on a smaller scale. But its museum, full of choice Maori carvings and implements; its fine public library, which contains the really valuable collection formed by Sir George Grey; and its art gallery, also enriched by generous and discriminating donors, possess treasures that are almost, if not quite, equal to the contents of the public galleries of Sydney and Melbourne.

My day of landing at Auckland happened to be a Sunday, so after partaking of the Vitellian banquet, which on these southern shores is served at one P.M., and seemingly combines luncheon, dinner and afternoon tea at one sitting, I proceeded by tram from Queen Street towards Onehunga, the western port of Auckland, which has been built on a narrow isthmus lying between the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean. I passed the celebrated Mount Eden, a perfect specimen of an extinct volcano, and, following my instructions, continued my journey by tram a couple of miles farther west, when I alighted in order

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to ascend One Tree Hill, which is said to offer a panorama even finer and more extensive than that to be obtained from Mount Eden. One Tree Hill is also of volcanic formation ; its steep flanks are thickly covered with coarse grass, the growth of many centuries since its internal fires died out, whilst sheep were grazing peacefully in the hollows of the deep craters. The southerly breeze of the morning had by this time freshened into a furious gale, which at times even made it hard to keep my footing on these steep exposed slopes ; nevertheless I duly gained the summit, and with my field-glasses took a survey of the really magnificent sweep of land and sea that was spread all around me. Below me, to the east, lay the city of Auckland, with its suburbs and its harbour, guarded ever by the long low pyramid of Rangitoto ; whilst to the west I could see the smaller port of Onehunga, situated on the broad harbour of Manukau, with its many exposed shallows and sand-banks, for on this, the western side, it was low tide, whilst across the isthmus at Auckland the tide was at its fullest—a curious phenomenon of which few places on the globe can present the like. On all sides appeared land and sea in intricate and bewildering confusion ; it was truly a grand and far-stretching panorama, but in my opinion not so impressive as the view of Hobart Harbour from Mount Wellington.

On the highest point of the hill stands a small clump of storm-vexed pines, and beside it, within a tall railing, is a flat tombstone bearing a brief epitaph, telling the reader that here reposes the body of Sir John Logan Campbell, who died in June 1912, at the advanced age of ninety-four, after having bequeathed to the people of Auckland this interesting hill and its noble surrounding domain of three hundred acres. It was indeed a gift fully worthy of a true merchant prince ; yet the donor asks for no memorial of bronze or marble, but only



Auckland, North Shore

appeals to the natural gratitude of the passer-by; for on the simple slab on the hill-top is graven a repetition of Sir Christopher Wren's classic epitaph in St Paul's Cathedral: "*Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice.*"

There are many pleasant walks and expeditions to be made in the immediate neighbourhood of Auckland, which has not as yet been invaded by the spirit of suburban development, as is the case at Sydney. In my walks I was constantly being reminded of my own native land, by which I mean, not the rich well-wooded scenery of southern England, but of the more open and barren country-side of mid-Wales. Everywhere there are broad paddocks enclosed by hedges of gorse, that in April were covered with an autumnal bloom of gay yellow flowers; there are grassy knolls crowned by groves of dark firs or pines, chiefly of the spreading *Pinus insignis*; in many places lie pools of clear water fringed with reeds and bulrushes amidst the marshy hollows of the fields—all these familiar features recalling to my mind the peaceful valleys of Brecknock or Radnor. The buildings, too, from having their iron roofs painted of a deep warm red, seem to harmonise with the sober colouring of the scenery. Nevertheless there was sufficient to remind me that I was really walking in the Antipodes (for of a truth New Zealand and Britain are removed in point of time and space as far apart as it is possible for any two countries on the surface of the globe, the official time of Auckland being nearly twelve hours ahead of that of Greenwich). Amid the masses of red-berried hawthorn, of yellow gorse and of ramping blackberry-bushes, uprose frequent clumps of the exotic-looking palm-lily, the "cabbage-tree" of the early colonists (*Cordyline australis*), with its queer mop-heads of spiky leaves and its crooked limbs, which is perhaps the largest of all known liliaceous plants. In due season the palm-lily bears great panicles

of odorous white blossoms, whilst the extraordinary vigour of this curious tree or plant is such that its vital properties are practically indestructible. Trunks that have been scorched by fire or soaked for weeks in salt water have been known to bourgeon forth at the first chance given, and even every chip cut from its stem or roots will ultimately sprout. But besides the unfamiliar palm-lily, there is another tree, alien equally to Britain and to New Zealand, the blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), that is a gift from the neighbouring Australian continent and grows freely in this congenial soil, where it is often planted in long straight lines, so as to serve as wind-breaks against the stiff southerly gales. At times, as I strolled along the road towards Purewa that overlooks the harbour, I noticed an odour of penetrating sweetness, the source of which I ultimately traced to a strong twining shrub with thick glossy leaves, beneath which were to be found clusters of insignificant white flowers. It was the aleagnis, a native of China, that flourishes here far more luxuriantly than ever it did in the carefully tended gardens of Italian or Algerian villas, where I first remember to have met with it. Around Auckland it is a veritable weed, forming stout hedgerows and thickets wherever it has been planted, and growing far more freely than the sweet-scented *pittosporum*, which latter is a true native shrub.

Speaking of plants, therefore, I think it more suitable to mention here two or three other native species, which must arouse the passing interest of the intelligent stranger, for outside the Bush the general vegetation appears with few exceptions to be mainly European in character. Besides the palm-lily already mentioned, there is to be seen everywhere a handsome creeping plant, with long pliant stems and dark shining leaves, and with depending bunches of white flowers or small purple berries, according to season. This is the *tutu*, vulgarly called

toot (*Coriaria ruscifolia*), and it is certainly a conspicuous plant; but it is also highly poisonous, a property always known to the Maoris, who lost many of the treasured animals presented to them by Captain Cook that managed to browse on the young shoots of the tutu. Unfortunately, it is abundant everywhere, so that the most depressing, though perhaps exaggerated, accounts have been given of the damage caused thereby to stock. Many cases, too, have occurred of children eating the tempting berries, which resemble bunches of small black currants, sometimes with fatal results, for up to the present no efficacious antidote for toot poisoning has been discovered.

In the damp gullies or marshy flats one sees great clumps of a handsome plant with broad purplish sword-like leaves and tall spikes of dull scarlet blossoms. This is the invaluable New Zealand flax, or flax-lily (*Phormium tenax*), which, "like the palm-lily, forms a distinct and unmistakable feature of the New Zealand landscape." Any adequate account of the many useful and ornamental purposes to which this plant was formerly put by the inventive Maoris would unfortunately be too lengthy for these pages; suffice it to say that their native flax supplied them with practically the whole of their garments and bedding. Nor were the early white colonists blind to the mercantile value of this flax, for so early as 1819 some experiments with the fibre were undertaken at Portsmouth, when the ropes so manufactured were officially pronounced to be "strong, pliable and very silky." At the present day this flax is largely cultivated for exportation, the market price of the fibre being recently quoted at twenty-four pounds a ton. *Phormium* must be very hardy in its growth, for it flourishes as freely in the inclement climate of the South Island as it does in the sub-tropical districts around Auckland; whilst at home it is

often seen growing as an ornamental plant in many of our gardens.

Another indigenous plant, which will be strange to English though not to Australian eyes, is the manuka, the tea-tree of the original settlers at Botany Bay, of which I have already spoken. This aromatic shrub (*Leptospermum scoparium*) may almost be considered as the national flower of New Zealand. It is found everywhere, but especially does it love the open sandy plains, which are often entirely covered with its dense growth, when they present a glorious sheet of snowy blossom. The flower is a pure white cinquefoil, with a crimson eye, and is in bloom from November to February, and even during my visit so late as April there were numberless belated sprays to be seen in their full beauty. In its habit of growth, the manuka somewhat resembles the Mediterranean heath, for it varies in stature from a low shrub to a fair-sized tree, the hard timber of which was formerly utilised by the Maoris for spear shafts and canoe paddles; whilst the white settlers found that it supplied an excellent and fragrant firewood. *Tantum pro floribus!*

The volcanic origin of the country-side near Auckland is strongly impressed on the traveller when he sees so many of the local walls constructed of loose blocks of dark lava, or notices the heaps of scoriæ collected off the soil and stacked in piles in the corners of the fields. The whole landscape, indeed, is studded with many volcanic tumps, of which Mount Eden and One Tree Hill appear the most remarkable. And yet, despite all these reminders of a distant clime and country, I found it hard to realise I was not walking in my own fatherland, when I looked upon the grassy fields and the brown fallows, with the pale blue sky overhead, and felt the keen bracing wind without noting its direction, and beheld the thickets of blossom-

ing gorse, and the scarlet hips and haws, and listened to the skylarks trilling overhead, or to the sweet twittering of the many goldfinches ; at every step my thoughts were vividly recalled homewards by scent and sound and sight and very atmosphere.

It is a journey of a hundred and seventy miles by rail from Auckland to Rotorua, which is the acknowledged centre of the volcanic zone of the North Island. The journey occupies about eight hours, but the scenery is always interesting and often picturesque ; whilst good cheap meals are served on board the train. Indeed, travelling in this part of New Zealand I found accompanied by every material comfort at most reasonable prices. Everybody, too, was kind and polite ; the hotel accommodation was good ; and the delicious wholesome food proved to me a welcome change after my late experience of Australian meals, for here in New Zealand one could always get tender lamb, whereas most of the Australian meat I found tough, lean and always overdone.

After leaving Auckland station the railroad passes through homelike surroundings, wherein the fir, the willow, the oak and the poplar figure more prominently than the gum-tree and the palm-lily. The Waikato River, a fine stream shaded by willows and tree-ferns, is constantly in sight from the train window ; at another time the line traverses for some miles a broad manuka-clad plain that is bounded by well-wooded mountains. At Puteruru the railway begins to ascend, and ere long a region of lovely unspoiled Bush is reached, thereby affording me my first acquaintance with the beautiful primeval forests of New Zealand. The Bush of these islands differs widely in its character from that of Australia. For the latter, except in tropical Queensland, consists usually of endless gum-

trees growing well apart and with little or no undergrowth, whilst the branches of the trees bear very few parasitical plants. Here, on the contrary, there are immense tall trees of hard timber bearing native names—rewa, tawa, koraka, totara and others—which in most cases are heavily draped with clinging, twisting vines, and loaded with orchids, ferns and various epiphytes on every bough. There is a dense jungle beneath, full of all manner of shrubs, ferns, creepers and mosses, many of which are of great beauty and all of interest to the botanist. The palm-ferns, very similar to those of Australian coastal forests, are everywhere abundant ; in places too is to be seen the Nikkau palm, with its stiff besom-like fronds, that is peculiar to New Zealand. Unlike the Australian Bush, the forests of New Zealand, when once destroyed, perish utterly and for ever, and if the undergrowth be cleared, then the tall giants of the forests slowly perish ; whilst in its turn the luxuriant jungle also dies away in time, once the protecting trees overhead have been felled. For the native trees of New Zealand own nothing of the vitality of the eucalypts, which neither fire nor the axe can wholly eradicate from the outraged stump. “The place thereof shall know it no more” is all too true of the fate of the glorious impenetrable tropical-looking Bush of New Zealand, whose rich soil the farmer covets and longs to clear by fire and axe, in preference to tilling the weedy plains. Indeed, our passage through the primeval Bush sped all too quickly, for it was not long ere we emerged on a pioneering district of ugly desolation and charred nakedness amongst the clearings atop of the opposing ridge.

“Naked, denuded,
Forestless, fernless,
Mute now and songless . . .
Strewn helter-skelter, headlong and helpless,
Burnt bones of the Bush.
And, high on the hill-tops,

Once muffled with misty, evergreen forest,
Gaunt tree skeletons,
Tall blackened splinters,
Limbless, and leafless, and lifeless for ever,
In piteous distinctness
Starkly appear . . .

O feet of the Fire, why sped ye so swiftly ?

O Beauty ! O Blooming ! why failed ye so soon ? ”

It affords some consolation to think that the surpassing beauty of their native Bush is at last being realised by the mass of the people of New Zealand, and that in consequence efforts are being made constantly to preserve a portion at least of what is still left intact. The tourist traffic, rather vulgar and sordid though it may appear in some of its aspects, has undoubtedly helped to call attention to the headlong course of ruthless destruction of natural beauties, and to the real value of the virgin Bush as an additional attraction of New Zealand, and consequently as an asset of no small value to the Dominion. But cultivated citizens do love their Bush for its own sake, and many were the bitter expressions of regret and indignation that I heard during my visit over certain recent acts of vandalism in the forest lands. It is also a hopeful and significant sign that in most of the many advertisements of the New Zealand spas and health resorts and tourist centres, the proximity of primeval Bush is openly adduced as a particular recommendation to the visitor. Not a few of the poets of Maoriland, too, have lifted up their voices in execration of the greedy and often senseless work of devastation of natural loveliness that can never be restored either by Nature or by man :

“ Keen is the axe, the rushing fire streams bright,
Clear, beautiful and fierce it speeds for Man
The Master, set to change and stern to smite,
Bronzed pioneer of nations ;—aye, but scan
The ruined beauty wasted in a night,
The blackened wonder God alone could plan,
And builds not twice. A bitter price to pay
Is this for progress—beauty swept away ! ”

I was glad when the on-coming dusk mercifully shrouded these poor skeletons of forest princes in its sable cloak, so that when the moon rose we had travelled beyond the zone of destruction and were just beginning to descend the slopes towards Rotorua. Suddenly, on turning at the bend of a long valley, there burst upon my sight the historic Lake of Rotorua, shimmering in the pale moonlight, with the dark form of the mysterious sacred island of Mokoia lying like a great black stain upon its silvery expanse.

Rotorua (twin lakes), which is the acknowledged chief spa of Australasia, and indeed of the Southern hemisphere, has nowadays also become a leading centre for tourists and pleasure-seekers, who flock hither annually in tens of thousands, in order to explore the wonderful volcanic sights wherewith the whole district abounds. The newly planned town, the official creation of the New Zealand Government, is charmingly situated on the lake between Sulphur Point and the old original Maori township of Ohinemutu. The immense Public Gardens, which contain the handsome bath-house and other buildings connected with the local mineral springs, are bounded to eastward by the waters of the lake, whose foreshore is well stocked with boiling wells, sulphur fumaroles, mud volcanoes, oil wells and other volcanic phenomena, many of these being utilised by the medical authorities. Of the many springs near or in these grounds, the Madame Rachel fountain, whose sapphire-blue boiling waters are of an enormous depth (said indeed to be unplumbable), is the most striking; and its alkaline properties produce the effect of bathing in liquid silk. The bath-house is well decorated and appointed, whilst the charge of one shilling for a private bath of any indicated mineral water seems more than reasonable when the luxury of all the bathing arrange-



Bush Scenery

ments is taken into account. The gardens themselves more than rival those of the famous old-established spas of France and Germany. There are lovely grassy lawns—and the grass of New Zealand resembles that of the Old Country in condition and appearance—where bowls, lawn tennis and croquet can be played by the many visitors or invalids ; and the long flower borders are well stocked with interesting shrubs and plants, the huge purple-pink cryptomerias being a special feature of these lovely gardens. The town itself consists of broad straight streets well shaded by lines of oaks, pines and gums, and all these leafy avenues lead eventually towards the beautiful blue lake that can be seen glittering through the trees in the distance. There are plenty of good shops, hotels and boarding-houses ; in short, with its delightful climate, its superb scenery, its excellent bathing establishment and public gardens, I consider on the whole that Rotorua is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating places on the globe. Indeed I know of no other place either by experience or by repute that can offer at one and the same time such a multitude of varied attractions. There is the lake, the pleasant town, the mountain scenery, the glorious rambles into the Bush, the marvellous volcanic sights ; there are fishing and shooting galore for the sportsman ; whilst the presence of the Maoris, who can be observed and studied here in their native villages and reserves, gives an additional interest to all—their history and their art imparting just that element of a romantic past which is so hopelessly lacking, yet so deeply missed, amidst the most beautiful scenes of Australia and Tasmania. Add to all these above-mentioned advantages, a healthy bracing climate, somewhat reminiscent of the Scottish Highlands, and a pellucid atmosphere recalling that of Southern Italy. To my mind there is only one drawback to all this wealth of beauty and interest, and that is the constant thought

of its transitory nature, for Rotorua stands upon a very thin portion of the earth's crust, and some day perhaps—well, all this delightful spot, with its buildings, its gardens, its show-sights, even its very lake, may be swallowed up in a trice by a sudden cataclysm of Nature, much as the neighbouring district of Wairoa was overwhelmed and ruined less than thirty years ago. Still, these are but gloomy anticipations, which I am meeting half-way; for, humanly speaking, there is no especial reason to suppose that Rotorua will not outlast our own time, and even that of a succeeding generation—possibly it may escape altogether from such a fate. Nevertheless the clouds of steam that on dull humid days, especially towards sunset, seem to envelop the whole place, and the ominous hollow sounds reverberating beneath our footsteps, serve always to remind us of the dread possibilities of the peculiar type of catastrophe wherewith Rotorua is perpetually threatened.

To do full justice to the world-famous sights around Rotorua, which any visitor may enjoy in comfort and at little expense, would baffle my limited powers of description. There is so much to inspect, even in the township itself, that the mind ere long becomes exhausted with a sort of mental indigestion. Close to the spa itself stands Ohinemutu, jutting out into the lake and shrouded all day long in the clouds of warm steam that issue from the numberless hot springs, where the Maoris easily and economically perform their cooking. And just behind the comfortable *pension* of Falloona's Waiwera House (where I myself boarded during my visit) lies a small ornamental park, known as the Kuirai Reserve, wherein, amidst the dense undergrowth of manuka, can be seen many evidences of thermal action. This place was rather an eerie spot for a solitary walk, particularly towards dusk; for though the hollow-sounding paths amid the manuka scrub were said to be quite

secure, yet one passed in close proximity to scalding mud-holes and boiling wells that one could hear working and bubbling all around. Along the lake shore, too, at the back of the Public Gardens, was a very similar volcanic area, full of strange sights and creepy sounds, to say nothing of the overpowering stench of sulphur.

One of the many interesting expeditions is the round of the Five Lakes, usually made by motor car in these days. Skirting the sandy plains along the shores of Rotorua, we soon reached Tikitere, an awesome volcanic spot, reeking of sulphur and reverberating with the most uncanny noises. Leaving this gruesome place, our car struck upward along a rough track leading through some magnificent Bush, till we reached the rocky lip of Roto-kawau (the Cormorant's Lake), a beautiful circular blue pool of immense depth, which filled an extinct crater of about a mile in circumference. It is a spot seldom visited, being surrounded by steep cliffs that are clothed with a luxuriant growth of shrubs and palm-ferns; and its exquisite setting recalled to my mind classical Nemi nestling in the Alban Hills. Returning through the Bush to noisy Tikitere, we sped thence through a bleak district covered with the dismal native bracken-fern and other weeds, before descending to the verdure-clad shores of beautiful Roto-iti (Little Lake). At the farthest beach of Roto-iti, below the shadow of the rocky bluffs and dense forests of Matawhaura, which form a prominent landmark, we suddenly came upon a Maori village on the edge of the Bush, known as Hongi's Track, from its sombre connection with that bloodthirsty old ruffian, who hanged many of his victims here from a lofty *tawa* tree that is still pointed out. The inhabitants of this primitive hamlet seemed less sophisticated than their country-folk at Rotorua, and we watched the handsome Maori women washing the family

linen in a warm pool amongst the rich undergrowth of palm-ferns ; whilst a number of dark-haired, dark-skinned, nearly naked children came to inspect the car. One of these infants presented me with a large bunch of belated *rata*, whose blossoms show pure scarlet in the sunlight and of a dull crimson in the shade. It was very late in the season for flowers, but I had already observed a few *rata* vines in bloom upon the tall trees we had lately passed, though too far out of my reach to obtain any specimen, so that I was very pleased to possess a few sprays of this splendid native creeper for close inspection. Indeed almost all the Bush flora had now ceased blooming, amongst the few exceptions, however, being the elegant willow-leaved veronica (*V. salicifolia*), whose long pale white or purple spikes were everywhere conspicuous. This plant is the *Koro-miko* of the Maoris, who have long been cognisant of its valuable medical properties. One other native plant I was also delighted to find, and that was the small orchid known as the fragrant earina (*E. suaveolens*), that was growing plentifully on a fallen tree trunk. It bore thin, stiff, dark green leaves and masses of pure white blossoms marked by a bright orange spot, and its perfume was overpoweringly sweet.

From Hongi's Track our driver took us right into the heart of the Bush, along a broad path that had been cut through the dense vegetation, by which means we finally emerged on the shores of Roto-ehu. From this lake our road led us along the margin of the farthest lake of all, Roto-ma (Lovely Lake), where we finally drew up at a little *whare* or shanty in the beautiful wilderness, and sate to eat our modest luncheon in a vine-covered arbour which gave us protection from the blazing sun.

Two miles from Rotorua, and reached by a broad avenue

lined with blue gums, is Whakarewarewa (mercifully shortened in common speech to Whaka), which is the recognised local show place. Here, in a broad valley about two miles long, can be seen some of the most celebrated and most widely advertised of the thermal wonders of New Zealand, including half-a-dozen geysers and the largest of all the mud volcanoes, the so-called "Frog Pond." Mud volcanoes are evil-looking things, consisting of deep circular holes of thick slimy mud, that vary in colour from almost white to almost black, according to their chemical properties. Each hole is very much alive and in a perpetual state of activity, flinging with a queer sound great gobbets of mud into the air, which fall back on the oily surface in weird and ever-changing patterns, forming now a rose, now a cat's eye, and now some architectural design. Sometimes there is only a single pool possessed by a solitary volcanic demon; but usually these mud-holes occur in groups of from three or four to some dozens, as in the extensive "Frog Pond" at Whaka. Their hollow flopping noise is very distinctive; and it can also be constantly detected in the gloomy thickets of manuka scrub outside the public gardens or in the Kuirai Reserve at Rotorua.

It is scarcely necessary to describe the geysers, those wonderful shoots of boiling water that spring with a roar and a hiss from the bowels of the earth; but their peculiar fascination can never be realised save by those who have often watched their vagaries. They are very diverse in their times and manner of playing, some working perpetually, others performing at regular intervals that vary in different geysers from a few minutes to an hour or more; and some only bursting forth in their awe-inspiring majesty at unexpected moments. To this last-named erratic class belongs the great Pohutu Geyser at Whaka, which owing to the long summer drought was in a very

lethargic state during my visit, so that I only once saw it in action, although the cauldron beside it used often to boil up in a most vigorous manner, lifting its scalding waves right over its containing rim of rock. On the welcome occasion of my seeing this fine geyser and its two smaller companions all playing merrily, the group made an object of surpassing beauty in the brilliant sunshine, a strong southerly wind blowing the dense steam before it, so that these great jets of water assumed the forms of erect snowy banners planted in the rock.

When this class of geyser turns sulky, it was formerly the practice of the custodians to spur them into activity, for the benefit of the tourists, by thrusting large bars of soap into their crevices, a process known consequently as "soaping." This artificial method generally proved successful at first, but after a time it was discovered that the geysers so treated were weakened and even destroyed thereby, so that the practice has now been more or less abandoned, after the loss of one or two of the finest geysers of this type.

And so one always waits and watches in the constant hope of seeing these capricious giants suddenly awake, for in time it grows natural to think of them as living monsters asleep in the secret chambers of the earth; and one scarcely wonders at their resentment on being aroused by so humiliating an expedient as the application of a bar of household soap! Many were the pleasant afternoons I spent at wonderful Whaka, with its Maori village, and plump Maori maidens diving for coins in the cold stream below the entrance bridge, and with its never-failing supply of volcanic marvels to delight and instruct.

Perhaps the most wonderful of all the many expeditions that can be accomplished within the day from Rotorua is the excursion known as the "Round Trip," which embraces a circuit of about forty miles, covered partly by horse-brake or

motor, partly by water, and partly on foot. Leaving Rotorua soon after an early breakfast, we drove along the highroad, past Whaka, continuing for more than fifteen miles through a barren, hilly district, till at last we came in sight of the Government Rest House at Waimangu, which is the centre of another volcanic area. Below the Rest House lies, in a deep cup-shaped crater, a small lake of a bright green hue, aptly christened the "Gem"; whilst a little to the left of this pool winds the steep pathway that leads down to the "Devil's Frying-pan," a sinister hollow that is commanded by a tall pointed rock of solid sulphur that from its shape is called the "Rock of Gibraltar." Down this rugged track our party was led by the guide, a local celebrity of unsurpassed loquacity, who treated us to a perpetually running discourse that was compounded of the most technical scientific terms intermingled with the most vulgar of pleasantries. (Parenthetically, I think it a thousand pities that all officially paid guides cannot be instructed to say what they have to say in a simple, natural manner, and at the same time be expressly forbidden to indulge in silly and often revolting remarks, which can only amuse the lowest type of tourist.)

The Frying-pan itself, of some acres in extent, is absolutely seething with suppressed volcanic energy, one of its many show-sights being the blow-hole, where from the boiling pool in the rocks great volumes of vapour are emitted at regular intervals of fifteen minutes, with a roaring like that of half-a-dozen express trains letting off steam. No doubt it was all very wonderful, and decidedly weird; yet after a while I grew weary, for the thick heated atmosphere of the place was that of a Russian bath. There was a scorching sun overhead; the sizzling ground was so hot that several imprudent members of our party lost their boot soles; whilst the various chemical

odours wherewith the Pan reeked, seemed to surpass in number and intensity the historic stench of Cologne. From this delectable spot, we had a stiff climb up some lava banks to the heights above, whence we could gaze down upon the crater, now quiescent and innocent-looking enough, of the defunct Waimangu (Black Water) Geyser, which has now ceased to play, if one may employ so frivolous a term to express its former mode of action.

The Waimangu Geyser, during the few years of its activity, ranked undoubtedly as the first wonder of its kind in the whole world. Its existence was first discovered in 1901, from which date it continued to play at fairly frequent intervals for the space of about five years. It was hardly a geyser of the usual type, for its basin was wont to fling into the air black liquid mud, stones and scalding water to a prodigious height, some of its tallest "shots" ascending to an elevation computed at fifteen hundred feet. This truly awe-inspiring geyser continued to play almost daily until 1906, and then abruptly ceased; since which time it has been regarded as defunct, though I see no reason to suppose that it may not be only somnolent. A fatality in 1904, when two wilful girls and a guide who sought to warn them of their danger were suddenly caught and carried away by the scalding mass of debris and water, made a deep impression on the public mind; and the story of this catastrophe, needless to add, is always retailed to the visitor by the local guide with every morbid and ghoulish detail. There is not much to see at the present time, merely a small hollow of about two acres half covered with dark steaming water; but just above Waimangu itself is another cauldron that hisses and steams furiously, the fall or rise of whose waters is believed to have caused these awful eruptions at the lower level.

A hot and tedious tramp over the rough lava beds has now to be performed towards the wonderful Lake of Rotomahana. The track leads beside a boiling streamlet from whose steep banks depend long trailing fronds of the most lovely ferns, that seem to enjoy the warm soil and the yet warmer spray of the torrent beneath. Clouds of dense steam puff out at us from all directions, as we slowly make our way towards the lake, which we can perceive in the distance looking like an opaque mass of the colour of *eau-de-Nil* rather than a sheet of living water. This glorious volcanic lake with opalescent waters is of considerable extent, being over three miles broad at this point. Born, or rather greatly enlarged, in the eruption of Mount Tarawera in 1886, Rotomahana has an unique setting, for it fills the large valley that lies between the huge frowning mass of its progenitor Tarawera and the graceful form of the Rainbow Mountain, a lofty pinnacle with its bare flanks covered with confused patches of pink, red, yellow and black, like the daubs of colour on a painter's palette. With a clear blue sky overhead, the colouring of the whole scene was superb; even the reflections from the opal-tinted lake caused the snowy breasts and wings of the many gulls that hovered round our pinnacle to assume a bright emerald tint. Yet all this natural colouring was marvellously delicate; for there were visible none of the primary reds and yellows and blues of tropical scenery, such as I noted at Noumea especially. Slowly we sailed over these fantastic waters, past slopes of grim black lava, whence hundreds of noisy jets of steam were rising into the clear air, through little bays whose heated waters boiled and bubbled around our keel. At one spot we were shown the site of the once-famous Pink and White Terraces, which were destroyed by the eruption of 1886 and whose fragments now lie buried some fathoms below the surface of the lake. Rotomahana answers

truly to the poet's description of a "perilous sea in a faery land forlorn"; and I could wish that some Australasian bard might be inspired to sing its fleeting splendours in imperishable verse, for it is not unlikely that all this new-born beauty may some day perish and disappear through the same volcanic action which caused its birth.

The shores of the lake are rather low, and composed of recent lava formations, so that they present an appearance of gigantic furrows of a dull lilac hue that cast deep black shadows. From every cranny of these rugged lava banks sprout masses of the tall native pampas-grass (*toi-toi*), whose tall plumes were waving by thousands in the soft tepid air. Such was the scene we gazed at during our crossing of the lake, until at length our Maori boatmen beached our little vessel on the shining white strand below Mount Tarawera, whose fearful rent in the flank above us yawned like the mouth of some huge trumpet. Here we landed, amid the murmur of the jewelled wavelets, and started to climb up a steep bank thickly strewn with volcanic cinders, the whole ridge being but a recent babe of Nature's, as it were, for it was formed in the eruption of less than thirty years ago. On reaching the peak of this steep volcanic saddle, there were superb views on either hand : to the right, Rotomahana, like some great liquid opal, lying in its enclosing cup of lava rocks and backed by the Rainbow Mountain ; whilst to the left below us stretched the broad clear expanse of Lake Tarawera, with its bosky shores, fresh and green and smiling as Windermere or Killarney. The two diverse aspects certainly offered a very remarkable contrast between the beauties of volcanic colouring and formation and the quiet charm of limpid water and verdant vegetation. From this point we proceeded by boat for some six miles or so across the glassy waters of Lake Tarawera, past wooded

slopes and cliffs, with here and there a waterfall, and with nothing to remind us of the bizarre but lovely volcanic scenes we had so lately quitted, save the naked dome of sullen Tarawera, that rose in sombre majesty over all, appearing, in Goethe's words, "like a peak of Hell uplifted in Paradise"—a constant warning and danger signal to confiding humanity nevermore to settle on these fertile shores that are dominated by his lugubrious shadow. We disembarked finally at Wairoa, where are still shown some ruined houses and other depressing mementoes of the township that was destroyed in 1886. Nature has now mercifully clothed the scenes of these past horrors with brushwood and vines, so that every year serves to obliterate more completely the traces of that tragical event. It was a stiff pull up a rugged slope to the little inn which still flourishes near the site of the ill-fated village; and oh, how thirsty we all were on our arrival, and how good tasted the indifferent tea supplied to us by that meagre establishment!

Entering a horse-brake and leaving Wairoa with the setting sun gilding the yellow leaves of the willows and poplars, we passed the wonderful Green Lake with its mystical islet of sinister repute, and thence passed along a road overhung by splendid palm-ferns to Tikitapu, or the Blue Lake, a circular sheet of lovely azure-tinted water that stands some sixty feet above the level of its near neighbour, the equally lovely Green Lake. The sylvan scenery perhaps reaches the zenith of its beauty here; rocks, lakes, mountains, trees, all are present in perfection. Driving uphill through thick Bush to the summit of the ridge, we left the verdure behind us, and followed a dreary bleak road winding through a barren district of bracken and toot, till we reached the Government's new plantations above Whaka, where the thousands of young larches showed as pale yellow masses against the brown background of withered

grass and sandy soil. The dusk had by this time fallen, so that we were glad to espy at no great distance the twinkling lights of Rotorua town and the steaming shores of the lake. Would that time and space permitted me to write more fully of the charms of Rotorua and of its fascinating surroundings !

Perhaps the most impressive of all the many show-sights of this Weird Wonderland of New Zealand is the Geyser Valley of Wairakei, which is in the district of Lake Taupo and about fifty miles due south of Rotorua. Thither I started with some friends in a hired motor car, pursuing the rather dull road that leads past Whaka and continues beneath the parti-coloured slopes of Maungakakamea, or the Rainbow Mountain. We passed the so-called "Porridge Pot," a large collection of mud volcanoes close to the roadside, which is enclosed in a large cone of black mud some fifteen feet high. The tourist ascends and inspects this show-sight by means of a ladder, from the topmost steps of which he obtains the view of a number of scalding mud-holes all spitting and gurgling viciously. Thence we sped along the dusty road through a wild region of low bald tumps and brown flats covered with a thick growth of manuka, bracken and toot, over which great eagle-hawks were hovering in the pale blue sky. Amidst these desolate plains there were pointed out to me some miserable-looking wild horses grazing on the withered herbage, where they pick up such sustenance as they can, and manage to elude being captured, for they are reckoned the property of anybody who may have the energy or wit to secure them. I was told that these wild horses were apt to cause a good deal of mischief by enticing valuable animals out of the settlers' paddocks that are not strongly fenced. My own ideas concerning wild horses being modelled on Lord Byron's description in *Mazeppa*, I was somewhat

disillusioned at sight of these shaggy hollow-backed anatomies of the trackless plains.

Towards noon we reached Wairakei, with a good little hotel and a garden situated in a most dismal region of manuka scrub, which had lately been much scarred by Bush fires. The chief amenity of the place is its bathing enclosure, consisting of a lovely pool of warm mineral water of an opaque bluish tint, and with a cold clear streamlet running beside it, the whole being surrounded by weeping willows and huge drooping ferns—an ideal spot for a bathe. We found it was a hot shadeless walk of nearly two miles from the hotel to the celebrated Geyser Valley, which is undoubtedly the most remarkable of the existing thermal wonders of the North Island. It is by no means an easy locality to explore, as is Whaka, for it entailed hard scrambling with alpenstocks up and down difficult and often dangerous tracks, so that the attendance of a competent guide is absolutely necessary to the visitor. So secret and sunken is this gorge that one has no suspicion of its very existence until its topmost cliff is reached and the descent is begun. And it is in truth a valley of the marvellous—geysers, mud volcanoes, boiling springs, a large bright green pool that emits the most alarming cracklings and groans, a mud-crater that casts up a dark fluid with sounds at intervals like the booming of a cannon, steam blow-holes and fantastic formations, all are contained here in this narrow secluded gulley, that is hidden amid the lonely scrub-lands of Lake Taupo. Perhaps the most wonderful and awesome of all its many sights is the huge cauldron, with the foolish name of the “Champagne Pool,” which lies at the base of a great concave cliff of bright red hæmatite. This pool has clear saline water with a temperature of over 260° Fahr. that is constantly bubbling and hissing and rising

and falling with terrific rumblings and amidst dense clouds of steam. The little cauldron of the Pohutu Geyser at Whaka, which I used to watch with such interest, seemed a mere hip-bath in comparison with this awful pool and its swaying masses of foam; and indeed sheer unwilling terror rather than curiosity is the effect usually produced on the spectator in watching its continuous agitation. Also, the soil around it is none too firm, and the guide invariably improves the occasion by solemnly relating the most gruesome tales of past fatalities at this spot connected with imprudent sight-seers, especially one yarn concerning an unhappy lady who pressed too close to the edge, slipped into the pool, and was boiled so thoroughly that her remains when rescued from the water had to be carried in buckets to the hotel.

Wonderful as were all the varied phenomena of the valley, I am not sure but that I thought the rich colouring of the soil and the rank vegetation of the place even yet more amazing. The deep crimsons and scarlets, the yellows, the purples, the whites were most vivid, as were also the different tints of some of the pools and fountains, from the cold clear lymph of the arsenic-impregnated stream that dashes through the bottom of the gorge, and is fatal to man or beast drinking therefrom, down to the sapphire-blue of the Azure Pool, which forms one of the acknowledged gems of this Geyser Valley. As to the plants, the ferns and mosses seemed to be larger in size and deeper in their tints than any I had seen hitherto, and are said to include one or two species that are unique to this valley.

Leaving Wairakei with intense regret, yet satiated with its marvels after a four hours' inspection, we started for Taupo, visiting on our way thither the Aratiatia Rapids and the Huka Falls of the Waikato River. This splendid stream, which from its swift limpid waters might well be styled the Rhone of New

Zealand, emerges as a fine broad stream from the mouth of Lake Taupo, and flowing northward finally reaches the ocean a little below Auckland. The Huka Falls are magnificent, both from their volume of water and their thunderous roar, as well as from the lovely sapphire tints that appear below the masses of falling foam. The rapids are equally beautiful, and their flow of deep swirling waves, as seen from the overhanging rocks and shady groves beside the stream, exhibits a grand spectacle that New Zealanders do not hesitate to compare with the rapids above Niagara. From the shores of the Waikato we sped onwards in the fast-waning light over a precipitous and not over-safe road so far as the head of Lake Taupo, the "Te Moana" of the Maoris, the great fresh-water inland sea of the North Island, which is some twenty-six miles across, and therefore the largest lake in the Southern hemisphere. We were all quite exhausted with our long day of motoring and sight-seeing, so that the distant twinkling lights of the Terraces Hotel at Onekake were a most welcome beacon to us, as our car began to ascend rapidly from the lake-shore.

This hotel is a popular resort of fishermen, the majority of them being apparently visitors from England or else Indian officers on leave, who naturally revel in the abundant sport, for trout, chiefly rainbow trout, simply swarm in the lake itself and in its adjacent streams and pools. Indeed it is said that Taupo is now heavily overstocked with the progeny of these imported fish, which have multiplied enormously in these congenial waters that are so well supplied with the necessary feed. It has now been suggested, and the idea seems a feasible one, to construct a light railway to connect the western shore of Taupo with the main trunk line, so as to benefit the markets of Auckland and Wellington, by sending thither a big proportion of the fish caught, for quite a large percentage of the

trout now taken is found to be slabby and unwholesome, owing to the lake being over-populated. At the hotel, where we spent the night, one heard amongst the many guests no talk save of fish and fishing; indeed it was fish, fish everywhere except at table, where, *mirabile dictu!* we had no lake trout served to us at any meal.

Next morning I was up betimes in order to obtain a bath in one of the many hot soda springs that are enclosed in huts in the hotel gardens, and also to take an early survey of the huge lake and the massive form of snow-streaked Tangariro towering above its farther shore. There are comparatively few thermal sights to be visited at Taupo (which forms the southern limit of the great volcanic zone), except some terraces of black silica in a ravine behind the hotel, and the Crow's Nest Geyser at Taupo Spa, a few miles inland from the lake. We therefore started on our return journey towards Rotorua by way of Waiotapu, which I was anxious to visit.

There is an inn here, and after luncheon we proceeded on foot, accompanied by an uncouth Maori guide, to inspect the lions of Waiotapu, though there is little or no vegetation on its arid volcanic cliffs, nor are there any existing geysers with their majestic fountains. On the other hand, there are numerous lakelets of bright hues, chiefly of different shades of yellow, which is the prevailing tint at Waiotapu, as bright reds afford the chief colour note at Wairakei. One of these warm pools, called Echo Lake, is a quarter of a mile long, and resembles a second Rotomahana in miniature, for it also was engendered by the fierce eruption of Tarawera in 1886, from which year date all the existing phenomena to be seen at Waiotapu. Another large shallow pool will bubble and cream like champagne on a shovelful of pebbles being thrown into its waters. Everywhere were to be seen glittering sulphur crystals, and in

many places the thin crust of earth trembled and rumbled beneath our feet in a most alarming manner. But the principal feature of this reserve consists undoubtedly in the many terraces of silica that have been forming here ever since the eruption of 1886, which by so doing appears to be trying to make some amends for its total destruction of the world-famous Pink and White Terraces, which used to be the especial pride of the whole island. These new terraces, which are yearly increasing in size, cover a considerable extent of ground, their tints being primrose, white, pale grey, pale green and salmon-pink. At their farthest point is being built up an exquisite natural waterfall, called the "Primrose Falls," from the predominating tint displayed in its silica rocks, over which cascades of clear sulphur-impregnated water are always falling and trickling with a pleasant murmur. So grotesque and intricate is this elaborate piece of natural volcanic architecture that I was at once reminded of some of the freakish rococo fountains at Versailles or in old Italian villa gardens. Waiotapu is often omitted by the tourist to these parts, but in my opinion its various sights are almost as interesting as those at Wairakei, though they are of a totally different type.

From Waiotapu it is a rather dull drive of about twenty miles to Rotorua.

I returned to Auckland by the same route, arriving at the railway station on a wild, wet evening, to find the Grand Hotel crowded and a room engaged for me at "Arundel," a comfortable boarding-house close by. Auckland was in festal array and crammed with visitors, owing to the presence of the newly arrived man-of-war, the *New Zealand*—"our battle-ship," as the loyal people of the Dominion proudly designated her. Thousands of men, women and children, including a good

sprinkling of Maoris, were pouring daily into the city, so as to inspect the new naval wonder, the nucleus of a fleet to be.

I left Auckland, with deep regret, on the following Monday evening by the *Maheno*, and as we steamed down the harbour the *New Zealand* gave us a fine searchlight display, sending magnificent sprays of light, like the feathers of some gigantic peacock's tail, far aloft into the dark starry firmament. The following morning we were sailing past the Bay of Islands, and at no great distance from the wild, barren, indented coast-line. About noon we rounded the North Cape, a rocky island surmounted by a lighthouse, and before dusk we had left in our wake the melancholy little group of the Three Kings. We had a return crossing almost as smooth as the going, a pleasing but highly uncommon experience in the Tasman Sea, and duly reached Sydney about noon on the fifth day.

I have only one grievance against New Zealand ; and it is this : it is so lovely and interesting that a visit there is liable to make one discontented and captious, and somewhat disinclined to appreciate the inferior attractions of other less-favoured countries.



Interior of Mayan House

VIII

MAORILAND OF TO-DAY

To attempt to write or speak of New Zealand without some description, however brief, of its interesting native inhabitants would be like eliminating the gloomy prince of Denmark from the play of *Hamlet*. Go where you will in New Zealand—I speak only from personal experience of the North Island—the Maori himself, his art, his history, his legends, his virtues, his vices, his euphonious but difficult place-names, are omnipresent. Perhaps from an ethnological, and even from a picturesque, point of view, the Maoris of to-day no longer interest, for they have passed with amazing rapidity out of the Stone Age, wherein they lived, moved and had their being some two or three generations ago, into our own industrial era; whilst they have practically ceased to wear the national dress and ornaments that are so familiar to most of us from pictures and photographs. Tattooing, too, has wholly died out among the males, and though I saw a good many old men at Rotorua, including not a few chiefs, I never once observed tattoo marks on a masculine face. Among the women-folk, however, the painful practice still continues popular, though in the female this savage form of decoration is invariably confined to the lips and chin; whereas the men in times past were tattooed freely in fanciful patterns both on the face and on the body, according to varying tribal custom. It seems strange that the women should be more conservative in this respect, but so it is; and I saw comparatively few adult women who had not their

lips of a dull blue and their chins decorated with some curious design ; in some instances really pretty and elegantly dressed women were thus disfigured.

Immediately on arrival at Auckland one sees the Maori man, his wife and his children in the streets, and very fine specimens of the human race they are, nor do they seem much darker than many Spaniards or Italians. They all wear European clothes, and the men especially affect knickerbockers and stockings, like so many of the white colonists of New Zealand (in marked contrast with the Australians, who are never seen thus habited). The manners of the Maoris are natural and polite, and there seems little or no prejudice against them on the part of their British conquerors, with whom they are now intermarrying pretty freely. How long it will take before the Maoris become actually absorbed into the mass of the white colonists I shall not attempt to predict ; but I think it doubtful if the race can eventually survive as a separate entity, in spite of the large numbers of pure-blooded Maoris who still flourish in many districts of both islands.

There are some elementary but intensely interesting facts about the Maoris which I must mention here, because I myself was wholly ignorant of them on my arrival, and because it is also important for the tourist to grasp them. The first of these is the circumstance that the Maoris are not the original inhabitants of New Zealand, as were the black-fellows in Australia and Tasmania. They are the descendants of a number of emigrants who sailed hither in their great canoes from a land known to them as Hawaiki, which was possibly the island of Hawaii. With infinite difficulty, and after many privations, these canoe-loads of brown humanity came in sight of "the long white cloud," or Ao Tea Roa, which gave them the name of their newly discovered home. Tradition tells of the fearful

state of exhaustion and sickness in which these storm-tossed wanderers arrived on these shores, where in all probability there was then no human being either to welcome or oppose their landing. A fine painting in the attractive Art Gallery of Auckland shows a graphic conception of their arrival on this coast, with the famished warriors pulling at the oars, the women faint for want of food, and the "tohunga" or priest frantically pointing towards the distant dark horizon across the foaming waves, and urging the flagging oarsmen to make a final effort to reach the long-sought goal.

This is certainly an historical event, but what is not so certain is the approximate date of its happening, which has been variously placed at some period between the twelfth century of our era and the fifteenth. But it may fairly be assumed that the Maoris have been residents and masters of New Zealand for at least five hundred years, and probably for a couple of centuries longer. As the sole and ruling race of these beautiful islands, the Maoris reached the highest point of culture attainable under the curbing conditions of the Stone Age. With no tools save those shaped by themselves out of local stone or jade, these ingenious and intelligent people contrived to produce most serviceable, and at the same time most elegant houses and war boats. Their carvings, seeing the only tools available, seem little short of miraculous, as visitors to the museum at Auckland will readily admit. The intricate and varied patterns and spirals of the tall prows of the stately war canoes are especially noticeable, and cannot fail to excite our wonder and admiration, even if we find the crude figures and grotesque monsters somewhat repellent. Of the smaller objects in stone or in native jade, such as the earrings, the ornaments, the clubs, etc., the museum of course contains a representative collection ; and genuine specimens of old Maori art of this type

what is
the
Maori

have now become both rare and expensive to purchase. Having inspected the many objects in the museum, visitors should not fail, after reaching Rotorua, to make a careful survey of the model native "pa," or fortified village, which has been constructed and adorned by Maori workmen on the old lines and with the old implements not many years ago; and which was originally erected for the Christchurch Exhibition of 1906. In this "pa" will be observed some fine specimens of native carving, but, besides this, the arrangement and planning of the whole place are wonderfully convenient and ingenious; whilst, from a strategic point of view, these Maori pas have never failed to extort the highest praise from all military experts. But it is impossible here to launch out upon so deep and lengthy a subject as the extent of civilisation attained by the Maoris prior to the coming of the "Pakeha," the white stranger and supplanter. And yet their state of civilisation was strongly at variance with many barbarous customs, and especially with the revolting practice of cannibalism, which here went side by side with the many evidences of progress in art and tillage. Now, of course, the Maoris are reckoned among the civilised, Christianised and educated subjects of the Crown, and I say no more.

Travelling in the train from Auckland to Rotorua, I noticed many Maoris at the railway stations, who were probably returning from some local "tangi," or funeral, a popular gathering which usually includes more feasting than lamentation. Amongst the older people of either sex it was curious to observe the ancient form of salutation by pressing noses, which seems absurd to many persons; yet, after all, is it really more unnatural to press the noses than to press the lips, when one comes to think over it? A few men of the old school wore flax or feather cloaks, and some of them, even of the younger men,



Maori Chief

sported in their hats a parti-coloured feather of the "huya," the curious native crow with a long hooked bill that is peculiar to the North Island and is nowadays become very rare. These tail feathers of the huya are still much prized as ornaments, whilst the large cloaks are sometimes composed of the short brown feathers of the wingless "kiwi," or apteryx, which is still not uncommon in the wild districts of the South Island. The children are bright, engaging little creatures, and at Rotorua and other tourist resorts are often apt to get into line and perform "haka," grinning, posturing, rolling the eyes and lolling out the tongue, for which exhibition they laughingly demand a penny.

Not the least of the attractions of Rotorua is the presence of many hundreds of Maoris, who still own considerable tracts of land on the shores of the lake and live in their own settlements, including the large villages of Ohinemutu and Whakarewarewa. Ohinemutu, the original township of these parts before Rotorua was planned and constructed by the Government, stands at the edge of the lake a little to the north of the modern spa. It still preserves its appearance of an old Maori settlement, and contains some fine carved halls, a totem pole, a monument to Queen Victoria and a number of houses, many of them built in the European style, but some of them still having the broad open portico and the carved beams of the ancient type of dwelling. The shore of the lake, and even its actual waters are well supplied with boiling springs and steam-holes, so that the Maoris can perform all their cooking and washing with little or no expenditure of time and trouble; whilst the many warm pools and streams allow them to bathe in water of any temperature they may fancy. Domestic life under such conditions runs smoothly and pleasantly enough for these handsome, easy-going and rather lazy people, who thus find the chief conveni-

ences of human life provided for them by Nature at their very doors.

All the Maoris of the Rotorua district belong to the Arawa tribe, which has always remained faithful to the British Crown, partly perhaps from a genuine spirit of loyalty, but partly also from the protection afforded by the British arms to this particular clan against its more savage and vigorous neighbours. For the Arawa are somewhat inferior in spirit and resource to many other tribes of the North Island ; so that in olden days their existence was often made a burden to them by the incursions of hostile countrymen. It is therefore, perhaps, not so much a matter for marvel that, as the *Ædui* of antique Gaul preferred the conquering Cæsar to their fellow-tribesmen, the despised Arawa in the nineteenth century rejoiced in the advent and advance of the victorious white "pakeha." Still, the loyal Arawa have their grievances ; and the fact that the Government has practically taken over their beautiful country into its own keeping, to the exclusion of certain rights of native ownership which are said to have been guaranteed by former treaties between the Arawa and the Crown, has recently awakened some uneasiness and distrust amongst the local Maoris. The question of the fisheries in the neighbouring lakes, which have of late years been heavily stocked with imported trout by the Government, has also caused some friction.

It was therefore in respect of these particular complaints, and also of general dissatisfaction, that in the month of April 1913 the newly appointed Governor of the Dominion, Lord Liverpool, made a special journey from Wellington, in order to hear grievances and to receive a deputation of the Arawa tribe at Ohinemutu. This official visit occurred during my own stay at Rotorua, so that I deemed myself particularly fortunate in thus having an opportunity of being present at

the intended ceremony of the Governor's reception by these dusky but intelligent citizens of the Empire.

The broad space in front of the chief meeting-house with the great porch had been carefully swept beforehand, and its enclosing stockade had been plentifully decorated with green boughs and fern-tree fronds. Chairs for the viceregal party had been placed beneath the carved gable of the portico, and in due course the Governor and his suite, attended by two stalwart Maori mounted policemen, appeared on the crowded scene. The whole of Ohinemutu had been astir from a very early hour, and most interesting it was to watch the many meetings and greetings, the "hongis" and the nose-rubbings of the less sophisticated Maoris of the outlying districts as they met one another on this occasion. The whole affair savoured not a little of comic opera, for the Maoris were clad mostly in an incongruous manner that suggested a compromise between the savage dress of their forefathers and the European fashions of to-day. Many of the men wore cloaks of kiwi feathers over their ordinary slop-garments; others carried *meres* (clubs) or spears; a few only strutted about in the full and correct panoply of their national costume. Amongst these latter, the old chief of Whaka afforded a most picturesque appearance, being naked save for a heavy kilt of dressed flax and a splendid feather cloak, with the usual ornaments and weapons. The fine effect was, however, hopelessly marred later, when the venerable gentleman suddenly disappeared for a moment and returned to our view with the addition of an ancient tall silk hat atop of all his antique finery! The reception opened with the presentation to his Excellency of a carved and painted model of a war canoe, which had been duly constructed by an old Maori artificer with the ancient tools and in the traditional manner. This gift having been deposited on the ground, the

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speech-making began in earnest, the addresses being given by various people of importance according to Maori usage. This consisted in the suppliant running rapidly backwards and forwards across the cleared space before the Governor's chair, and each time calling out a sentence, which was always prefaced by the native word of welcome, "Haeremai!" Each sentence, thus rapidly interjected in the Maori tongue, was immediately translated into English for the Governor's benefit either by the Reverend Mr Bennett, the Maori Anglican minister at Ohinemutu, or by Dr Pomare, one of the two Maori representatives in the Parliament of New Zealand, both of whom were in attendance on his Excellency during the reception.

I have no idea naturally of the actual merits of the case under discussion, nor of the reasonableness or the unreasonableness of the petitions brought forward in this quaint, and at times impressive, manner. But it was pathetic to hear these poor folk—children of the Stone Age thrust headlong into the fierce struggle of our industrial civilisation of to-day—pleading with simple yet earnest eloquence for the restoration of their ancient lands, which the Government has now partially sequestered, and bitterly lamenting (like so many of their white brethren) the increased cost of living and the difficulty of making both ends of the household budget meet. Fears were also expressed as to the ultimate fate of the island of Mokoia, to whose graceful form in mid-water many of the speakers pointed with hand or spear waved aloft: "Oh, do not suffer our holy and ancient patrimony of Mokoia, lying yonder in our lake, to be surveyed or polluted!" Such was the piteous appeal of a singularly graceful and persuasive chief, one of the few present who bore his savage nudity and trappings with a natural dignity.

And it seemed to me at once so sad and so futile, that these moving appeals should be thus addressed to a worthy British

peer, nominally the satrap of an all-powerful white king, who had about as much power of his own motion to grant the requests of these suppliants as had the humble writer of these trivial pages. I do not suppose that for an instant the Maori mind could grasp the essential fact that an ornamental British Governor of to-day cannot possibly interfere with the unswerving course of civic progress in the Dominion of New Zealand ; that he is practically powerless to intervene in their behalf, and utterly unable to alter the fixed laws of the State. Apart from the actual petitions, some of the compliments paid and phrases turned were most felicitous. " May the future ever shine upon your Excellency and your family, even as our bright sun is now shining on your faces ! " was one of these truly elegant flowers of speech used on this occasion, as the poor Governor sate blinking in the fierce hot beams of the mid-day sun. A cordial and grateful reply, but naturally a reply of absolute noncommittal to any definite course of action, was the reward given for the many welcomes and the carved canoe. What else, more or less, could a so-called Governor, who entertains but does not govern, in these days be expected to say in return or in reply ?

The ceremony of the addresses was followed by a series of native dances, performed first by women in ancient costume, who did the various " poi " movements with balls and feathers, to the accompaniment of the accordion. It was a most elegant and picturesque performance ; and a touch of genuine barbarism was added to it by the truly awesome grimaces and eye-rollings that some of the older women indulged in throughout the whole of the posturing. The " poi " dances of the women then gave place to a war " haka " by the men, which to my mind proved a most sorry spectacle. In the first place, the dancers, though stripped to the waist and wearing the flax

kilt, had almost all retained their shoes and stockings, and in some cases had merely rolled up their European trousers. This circumstance of itself produced a most incongruous effect, which all the subsequent whooping and stamping and yelling and face-pulling failed to remove. It was a depressing, uncanny affair, and I was thankful for its termination, when I watched the fat exhausted warriors retire limp and perspiring. A savage dance, performed *con amore* by real savages, always makes an interesting exhibition ; but such a spectacle of so-called civilised men, who have only just divested themselves of their habitual everyday garments, struck me as being both unpleasant and unnatural. It is all very well to revive the antique or the medieval, so long as such revival can be made picturesque ; but to evoke rude barbarism out of what is now fixed modern commonplace respectability, at any rate in the open, seemed to me a gross error in taste and judgment. This criticism does not, however, apply to the classic Maori dances and "hakas" given each week, under the superintendence of the Reverend Mr Bennett, in the little local theatre of Rotorua, where on the boards and behind the footlights the various representations in ancient costume of old Maori life and legends seem quite free from the objections I have just stated, and afford pleasure and instruction to all present.

Still, the fact remains that, though the Maori can absorb the ideas and habits of modern civilisation, such adaptability is by no means universal. And the Arawa are by repute amongst the least attractive of the various Maori peoples. Certainly the streets of Rotorua seemed full of Maori loafers, most of them disgustingly fleshy, but always courteous and good-natured. The women, on the other hand, with their more conservative instincts, do not seem to have deteriorated so much as the men-folk ; presumably, domestic duties contrive to keep them

tolerably occupied, and also to preserve their figures, for they certainly appear neither so fat nor so idle as the men. There are, of course, exceptions in plenty, and to offer one instance only, that came to my personal knowledge, I must mention the case of the Maori chauffeur who drove myself and some friends on a two days' excursion to the wonderful volcanic sights at Wairakei and Taupo. He was a full-blooded Maori of splendid physique, and I never saw a more skilful or capable driver, nor a more obliging one. My own experience was so limited that I can only hope there are plenty more Maoris of equal skill and intelligence in existence.

Of course the present-day Maoris are all nominally professing Christians, and belong to the various denominations of Christendom that have been at different times introduced into New Zealand since the early colonising days. Whether the old beliefs and superstitions have been completely expelled from the minds of the existing and the up-growing generations of Maoris, it is impossible to tell. Outwardly, at least, there remains no survival of the pagan practices which in old days used to take the place of religious worship amongst this race. Most of the women still wear the "tiki," the queer-looking little cramped deity, or talisman, of carved greenstone with its scarlet eyes; and so much as five pounds is sometimes paid for a good modern tiki, the genuine antique stone-carven specimens of this ornament being now almost unobtainable. No doubt some mystical property is still considered to reside in the tiki; otherwise one cannot imagine why the Maori women should cling so obstinately to this very ugly archaic form of pendant, whereas so many fashionable locketts can nowadays be bought for much smaller sums of money. How far the Maoris believe in their old legends and traditions, many of them of extreme beauty and of deep human pathos, it is also hard to say.

Several places are undoubtedly still held in some degree of sanctity by them, and amongst these the island of Mokoia holds a noticeable place in the affections of the Arawa.

The graceful pointed form of this venerated spot rises almost in the centre of Lake Rotorua, being some three miles distant from the little pier. One lands at a white sandy beach, and steps ashore to wander in a narrow belt of rough grass that stretches between the water and the Bush of the steep hill-side. There were splendid palm-ferns visible in the thickets overhead, whilst along the shore were many wild cherry-trees with their gay autumnal foliage, and also many feathery wattles that were covered with the numberless pale-yellow tassels of a second bloom. There was no sign of life, except for a few fantails and other small native birds, and for the presence of a few half-wild pigs that were rooting and grunting amidst the rank herbage by the water's edge. The little Maori village seemed utterly deserted; the rickety *whares* and their carved meeting-house appeared to be falling to decay, and the only building that showed signs of stability was a small wooden pavilion of a commonplace pattern, whose use I was to learn later. Nominally, Mokoia is inhabited by Maoris, though practically no one lives here now, not even to collect the shilling a head that is legally charged for each "pakeha" who invades this jealously regarded native reserve. No doubt the roaming porkers belonged to absentee owners, who had also fenced in some gardens, where plants of the *kumera*, or sweet potato, were still thriving, in spite of porcine depredations. The fact seemed to be that Maoris only occasionally rowed across the lake to Mokoia, during the hours of daylight, in order to tend their swine or to gather the vegetables that they had planted in its sacred soil.

Be that as it may, there was no Maori present to demand the

recognised fee of the peaceful intruder, and indeed nowhere was there any sign of animate humanity on the soft autumn afternoon on which we sailed across the clear waters. On disembarking, we strolled along a rough narrow track through the lush grass, and following the line of the shore, whereon the tiny waves were breaking with a pleasant murmur, we suddenly came upon a steaming pool of warm mineral water, rudely enclosed by large square stones. This was the famous spot known as "Hinemoa's Bath," around which clings one of the most gracious of the old Maori legends. This tradition bears some resemblance to the old classical myth of the loves of Hero and Leander, though the Maori legend owns a happier issue to its difficulties. Tutanekai, bastard son of the chief of Mokoia, ardently loved the beautiful princess Hinemoa, daughter of Umukaria, who ruled over the territory of Whaka on the mainland. The love of the handsome but base-born Tutanekai was warmly returned by the lady ; but the course of true love was rudely interrupted by the action of Hinemoa's father, who absolutely rejected the idea of an alliance between his daughter and so ineligible a suitor as young Tutanekai. The youth was forbidden to sail to the shore opposite on penalty of immediate execution, if he were caught ; whilst, to prevent Hinemoa crossing by stealth to visit her lover on the island, all the canoes of the people of Whaka were by the chief's command always beached inland. Day after day, and night after night, in calm weather, the distracted maiden could hear the strains of her lover's flute wafted across the lake, till finally the magic of his music drove her to an act of desperation in order to rejoin him. Making an improvised raft out of gourd-skins, one dark night Hinemoa escaped from her village to the lake and thence proceeded, half swimming and half floating, to cross the three miles or more of deep water that lay between

her home and that of Tutanekai. The perilous feat was accomplished in safety ; the intrepid princess finally stepped ashore on Mokoia, but more dead than alive with exhaustion, and quite numbed with the cold. On landing, she happened to espy clouds of steam rising from a pool beside the shore, whereupon at once she plunged into the grateful tepid waters, whose healing powers renewed her strength. Here, at day-break of the following morning, she was found by Tutanekai, and great was the mutual ecstasy of the pair. From that day this warm mineral fountain became known as "Hinemoa's Bath," for its original name was the Waikimihia Spring. The result of this escapade, as I have already hinted, had a happy ending. Old Umukaria relented, or at any rate affected to do so, on finding he had lost his daughter ; Hinemoa was duly wedded to her lover ; and the pair lived happily ever after, dying in a good old age and leaving a numerous progeny behind them, whose descendants still dwell upon these beautiful shores and often sing or speak of the courageous feat performed by their high-spirited ancestress. And, for ourselves, it was a real pleasure to recall the touching old story (which in all probability is quite as true as many of our own cherished historical tales whose veracity none would care to impugn) in this charming spot, so redolent of poetry, sunshine and romance.

Retracing our steps, we proceeded towards the beach, where our pinnace lay at anchor, and thence made our way past the tumble-down *whares* of the deserted native village, with its patches of mingled weeds and herbs, towards a small modern building of framework set with glazed sash windows, most obviously the recent construction of some white carpenter or builder. This ugly pavilion stood far apart beneath the shade of a magnificent *totara* pine, and offered little or no attraction in its outward aspect to the explorer. Nevertheless,



Carved Maori House

acting on a hint I had received at Rotorua, I approached the building, and with some difficulty managed to open one of its windows. Within, the aperture revealed a small room containing a large block of solid stone that bore a rude resemblance to the human torso. Beside it were some fine antique feather mats of various colours, and some odd-looking wands, or thyrsi, decorated with white plumes, that had once been used by the old-time *tohungas* in their mystic rites. To the present-day Christianised and civilised Maori the contents of this little building would presumably present just a mass of derelict objects of ancient veneration and mystery; at least that would be his spoken opinion in reply to the query of any stranger anent these once sanctified orts and objects. The stone block is said to be of remote antiquity, and is traditionally believed to have been one of the *penates* of the original pioneers from Hawaiki, borne hither over all those leagues of ocean to find a final resting-place in the sylvan island that lies on the bosom of Rotorua. Certainly the stone in question was never quarried on these islands, and equally certain is the fact that it was in former times regarded with superstitious feelings. The story of how this uncanny object came to be enclosed in this wooden hut is curious, and not at all edifying. Long after Christianity had become the accepted creed of the Arawa tribe, this historic stone continued to be regarded with a certain degree of awe by the Maoris; and on the occasions of tourists landing at Mokoia, a small charge was made for an inspection of this particular relic. Some few years ago a disreputable and drunken old Maori acted as custodian of the island, which, as I have already said, is only peopled at irregular intervals. On this old reprobate once showing this stone emblem or deity to some facetious and vulgar-minded tourists, the latter made an attempt to buy the stone itself, and their offer of five pounds

proved too tempting for the scruples of the tipsy old Maori. Accordingly, the young men carried off the palladium of Mokoia in their boat to Rotorua, and probably would have succeeded in conveying it away altogether from the district, but that by some accident rumours of their "deal" leaked out amongst the local Maoris. In spite of their open denial of their pagan idols, the greatest excitement and indignation were aroused amongst the native community; and such was the attitude of the Maoris that finally the police of Rotorua seized and impounded the mysterious stone figure, pending the result of an inquiry. The late bargain made with the drunken keeper of Mokoia was declared illegal, whereupon the stolen image was duly restored to its owners or followers. The existing unromantic shanty was then erected to house the rescued deity, and here also were brought and deposited a few surviving relics of the olden days of sacrifice and divination to keep the aforesaid image company.

On seeing the contents of this eerie chamber, I no longer marvelled at the partial abandonment of this island by the Maoris, however civilised they may choose to consider themselves. The dark mysteries and terrible features of an ancient religion usually die very hard, and doubtless there appears something alarming and even dangerous in the atmosphere of their sacred island to the Maori mind, so that these people prefer nowadays to spend their nights in Whaka or Ohinemutu, rather than in close proximity to these ancient objects of worship. The old gods are undoubtedly dethroned and discredited; still, in the popular imagination, they do exist, and are desperately angry with the modern generation that openly flouts them. Perchance they may still retain some possibilities for evil in this hallowed spot, especially when the night grows dark and the wind wails mournfully across the lake. Then, too, on the crest

of the hill sleep many hundreds of Maori men and women of past ages, for there is an immense burying-ground on the highest point of the island. Might not the wandering spirits of their ancestors, sympathising with the despised deities that they themselves once worshipped and revered, descend from their lofty cemetery to take some revenge on their decadent and vanquished descendants? All these ideas floated through my brain as I explored that cramped and creepy chamber. Indeed I can easily understand the natural reluctance of the Maori to inhabit the haunted shores of this Iona of his rejected faith. Of course all superstition is nonsense; but the Maoris are only human after all, and every human being is more or less superstitious in his heart of hearts.

These are but a few rough impressions noted and hastily jotted down during my travels in the North Island; and I am sorry that I have no space to write more fully on this fascinating subject of the Maoris, their traditions, their art, their natural courtesy, their future prospects.

IX

NEW CALEDONIA AND THE NEW HEBRIDES

ONE special advantage from making Sydney my headquarters during my twelvemonth in Australia was its central position for undertaking various expeditions by sea ; and in a moment of peregrinatory enthusiasm I decided to visit New Caledonia and the New Hebrides, as being not only a peculiarly interesting trip in itself, but also as one that has hitherto rarely been attempted by the tourist. The island of New Caledonia, which is about three hundred miles long, and therefore the largest in the many South Pacific archipelagoes, lies about one thousand miles due north-east of Sydney ; whilst the New Hebrides, perhaps the wildest and least known of all the South Sea groups of islands, are situated about five hundred miles north-east again from Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia. Two lines of steamers call at this latter group of islands : the Burns-Philp Line, located at Sydney, which sends a boat thither every two months, by way of Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island ; and the packet-boat *Pacifique*, of about eighteen hundred tons, belonging to the French company of the *Messageries Maritimes*, which makes a monthly sailing to Noumea and thence to the New Hebrides, and thence back to Sydney *viâ* Noumea : the whole of this "tour complete" occupying about three weeks and the return fare being the very moderate sum of twenty pounds. It was by this latter and far more interesting route that I made the expedition. Unluckily, I did not select a very auspicious season for my voyage, for after having duly

embarked on board the *Pacifique* at Sydney I learned casually two days later, on the high seas, that owing to a recent outbreak of bubonic plague at Noumea (of which I had hitherto been told nothing) I must prepare myself to undergo some of the odious restrictions of close quarantine : a dismal warning which was partially fulfilled.

The *Pacifique*, which was destined to be my home for the next three weeks, was a rather old-fashioned but tolerably comfortable boat. She was herself a fragment of "la belle France," cast adrift in Australasian waters, for her officers and crew were all French subjects, being either Frenchmen, or Algerian Arabs, or Kanaka black "boys" from the Loyalty Islands, a small archipelago under French rule that lies to the east of New Caledonia. These Kanakas recruited from the Loyaltys are reputed the best and sturdiest of the various Melanesian "boys" one meets with in these seas ; and never have I seen finer specimens of the human race than the men who composed the working crew of the *Pacifique* : tall, well-built fellows, with pleasing faces, and with the hue and symmetry of an antique bronze. Active, cheery and humorous, it was always amusing to watch these jolly creatures working at their tasks aboard ship, or helping to load and unload when in port ; so that I found it hard to believe the statement of a rather spiteful old planter's wife on board, that these capable-looking men had "the strength of an ox with the heart of a chicken." Throughout the steamer French alone was spoken ; the cooking was French, and good at that ; there was abundance of red French table-wine, which I was glad to taste again with its reminiscent smack of past Continental travels. All of these things combined to render the four days' ocean transit to Noumea pass quickly enough, in spite of high winds which compelled the constant presence of the fiddles on the saloon table. But all

the same it is a dull stretch of open sea, with never a steamer or barque in sight during the whole transit ; whilst a pair of molly-hawks that hovered about our stern and a few flying-fishes made up the sum-total of marine life visible. Each evening was, however, rendered most fascinating by reason of the lovely phenomenon of the conjunction of Venus and Jupiter, which fell at this period, and the gradual approach of these two brilliant planets made nightly a fine spectacle in the western heavens.

Early on the morning of the fifth day I awoke to find our boat making the entrance of the fine harbour of Noumea, formerly known as Port de France, the capital of this rich and important island, which has ranked as a French possession for nearly seventy years. Discovered by Captain Cook in 1774 (and therefore presumably a prospective British colony which we deemed it beneath our notice ever to claim formally), the island of New Caledonia was officially added to the Second Empire by Admiral Febvrier-Despointes, whose statue now adorns the little park of Noumea ; and it was the same acquisitive French seaman who also annexed the adjacent Île des Pins and the Loyalty group to the realm of Napoleon the Little.

Throughout the sixties and seventies a fierce local war, marked by much bloodshed and cruelty, raged between the warlike aborigines and their white supplanters, who found it no easy task to reduce the native population to complete subjection, though at last the Kanakas of New Caledonia seem to realise the hopelessness of further resistance to a great European military power. Already during the days of the Second Empire the French home Government had begun to deport criminals to this remote colony, and after the sanguinary business of the Paris Commune in 1871 whole ship-loads of convicted Communists were despatched to Noumea, amongst

these political prisoners being the dreaded *pétroleuse*, the incendiary Louise Michel, and the notorious editor of the *Lanterne*, Henri Rochefort. The latter was, however, assisted by his friends to escape in a cutter to the Australian coast : a circumstance that caused intense chagrin (and also it was whispered intense personal fear) to the French President, Marshal MacMahon, who tried to appease his choler over Rochefort's rescue by angrily dismissing many of the French officials on the island.

Noumea remained the dumping-ground for hundreds of French convicts during many years, and it was only so late as 1896 that the further deportation of these undesirables was stopped, and this at the special request of the British Cabinet, acting on urgent Australian appeals.

At that date there were said to be about two thousand of these unhappy wretches at Noumea, whose numbers have now dwindled to some five or six hundred. Nevertheless the whole island, with Noumea itself in a special degree, is tainted with the criminal stain of three generations ; and such Frenchmen and Frenchwomen as have made permanent homes on these tropical shores are either ticket-of-leave convicts (*libérés*), the children of convicted parents, or the relations of convicts. For the French official, whether soldier or civilian, always detests any soil other than that of his native land, and almost invariably removes himself and his family back to France as soon as he has made his pile or has completed the necessary term of colonial service.

The harbour of Noumea, one of the finest in the Pacific, is practically enclosed to the north-west by the long hilly form of the Île Nou, which contains the many substantial buildings of the penal settlement. The creeks of the harbour ramify far inland, and the whole scene is backed by the graceful Mont d'Or

and the more distant ranges. The town itself appears of considerable size and has many suburbs, its chief feature being the loftily situated gothic cathedral of white stone. Altogether it is an exquisite spot, this harbour and capital of New Caledonia, with its noble setting of rugged grey and violet mountains to landward, and its deep sapphire-blue sea relieved by the pale beryl-green waters and the snowy surf that mark the ring of the enclosing barrier reef. And if the landscape is lovely and brilliant by daylight, it seems even more fascinating on a clear warm moonlit night, what time the moonbeams convert the ugly zinc roofs of the town into sheets of shining silver, and the mysterious forests of the interior are illumined here and there with glowing bush fires.

Fortunate it was for me that this haven held a sufficiency of natural beauties that varied but never waned in the changing lights of morning, noon and even, for close to the grimy wharf the *Pacifique* remained for three whole days, discharging her cargo and retaining her few passengers bound for the islands as temporary prisoners, owing to the quarantine regulations of the port. I need hardly add that these rules and methods were as aggravating as they seemed childish and useless, for during the whole of this wearisome period of detention a strong breeze was blowing clouds of filthy dust from the infected quarter of the town right across our decks, and of course it is the dust that is always regarded as the chief medium of infection. Using my powerful Zeiss glasses (without which no traveller should undertake any trip by sea), I could easily distinguish the zinc barrier that marked off the plague-stricken portion of the city; the uniformed French officials with their squirts and buckets of disinfectants; and the gangs of miserable convicts employed in sweeping and burning rubbish. Indeed there was every sign of belated efforts being made to cleanse



Coast of New Caledonia



Bringing Cargo

the dirty town, and eradicate the seeds of "la peste," which here formed the sole subject of comment and conversation. It was therefore with a sigh of genuine relief that at length I heard the signal for departure given, and realised we were weighing anchor to quit that beautiful but by this time all too familiar harbour.

Our outward course, as directed by the genial fat half-breed pilot, the *soi-disant* heir of a long line of New Caledonian chieftains, lay within the clear green waters of the broad coral reef that skirts the eastern coast, so that for some five hours I was able to enjoy an excellent view of the savage coast-line. Like its European namesake, New Caledonia is unmistakably "stern and wild," and its general aspect from the sea gives some excuse for Captain Cook's uninteresting nomenclature. The bare earth above the towering dark cliffs was of a marvellous tawny-red, with many patches of bright yellow (chrome being one of the exports of this rich metalliferous island); here and there deep ravines in the red soil showed like huge bleeding wounds inflicted in some long past contest of giants. At intervals were seen broad streaks of deep velvety black, denoting the presence of manganese. The staring tints of red and yellow and sable of the bare soil, the greys and pinks and purples of the distant mountains, the hard blue of the ocean, the pale green of the calm waters and the snowy billows outside the reef—all afforded a splendour and variety and depth of diverse colouring that I never saw equalled elsewhere save in the volcanic districts of New Zealand; and as I noted all this prodigal magnificence of Nature, I wondered that no artist had as yet invaded these lovely coasts with brush and palette. Now and again, as a relief to the highly coloured scenery, appeared little sheltered beaches of white coral, fringed by waving coco-palms and distinguished by conical reed-

thatched huts, that peeped out of groves of bananas and mangoes.

Growing thickly in several of the gullies descending to the shore were the curious New Caledonia pines, which are peculiar to this island. This tree, which attains an immense height, is less graceful than its cousin, the pine of Norfolk Island, that is so common a feature of Sydney gardens, for it lacks the long symmetrical branches of the latter, which are here replaced by short stumpy tufts of foliage, so that the New Caledonian tree bears some resemblance to a colossal hop-pole. It sounds strange, however, to note that Captain Cook's geologist on board the *Endeavour* in 1774 actually mistook, at no great distance, the groves of this tall pine for a basaltic formation of the coast-line ! One islet close to the shore has been christened by the suitable name of Île Porc-à-pic, or Porcupine Island, for, with these tall slender trees standing on its crest, it certainly recalls some gigantic porcupine with quills erect lying on the surface of the water.

Issuing from the protecting reef and traversing for a whole day another stretch of ocean, towards sunset we sighted the mountain-tops of Efate, one of the southernmost of the New Hebrides archipelago ; and whilst it was still daylight we were steaming slowly up the expanse of Meli Bay, so as to reach the picturesque inlet of Port Vila, the seat of Government in the New Hebrides, the residence of the British and French Commissioners, and generally the hub of the little universe of this remote group of islands.

Under the Joint Convention of 1906 the New Hebrides were placed under mixed British and French rule, an arrangement which is usually called the Dual Control, or Condominium. Each power has its own commissioner with his officials, but justice is administered by means of a composite court, con-

sisting of three judges, of whom the president is a Spanish jurist nominated by King Alfonso, who holds the balance of adjudication between his English and French assessors. "The object of the Condominium is to secure settled government for the islands, protection for the natives, and a permanent settlement of the land question." The intention thus stated sounds reasonable enough ; but, as may easily be imagined, this political anomaly of the Dual Control has produced anything but satisfactory results ; and now the British residents in the New Hebrides are complaining bitterly of abuses and irregularities on the part of the French officials, traders and planters. Some fresh arrangement will most certainly have to be suggested ere long, the general feeling in Australia demanding that France shall surrender her moiety of rights in these islands in exchange for suitable recompense elsewhere, perhaps in Western Africa. Nevertheless, despite British dissatisfaction with the present working of the Dual Control, it seemed to me that French interests were more firmly fixed here than those of British subjects ; and there appears to exist a state of mutual forbearance rather than of cordial co-operation between the white residents of the two European Powers. At present Englishmen declare that their interests are not being fairly safeguarded, although on their part they have adhered conscientiously both to the letter and the spirit of the late Convention ; whilst the French traders and planters still practise, almost with absolute impunity, every abuse of grog-selling, kidnapping and cruelty amongst the natives that this political partnership of two great nations was expressly created to extinguish for ever.

Under such conditions Vila serves as the administrative centre of the New Hebrides, and incidentally it may be remarked that this metropolis is about the size of a small Bush hamlet, and scarcely more imposing in its outward aspect,

seeing that all its buildings are constructed of weather-board and corrugated iron. There is one inn (of course called the Grand Hotel by its proprietor), a wretched hovel that is commonly known by the ominous name of the "Blood House." Conspicuous for size and ugliness is the Court House of the Condominium, a large wooden pavilion on the hill-side that proudly displays the two standards of the French Republic and the British Empire-Kingdom. On a sylvan islet in the centre of the harbour, and therefore in a safe spot for retreat in the possible event of an irruption of noble savages from the pathless woods of the interior of Efate, stands the official tin palace of the British Commissioner.

Of course the port authorities of Vila had, very properly, refused pratique to our steamer during the whole of our visit to the New Hebrides, so that consequently the *Pacifique* lay in the harbour flying the sinister yellow flag. This decision was perfectly justifiable, for if once the bubonic plague were to attack the Kanakas of these islands, its effects on the already dwindling native population would probably result in overwhelming catastrophe. For the people of this archipelago were never a cleanly race, nor a very healthy one; and now, largely owing to the grog which, despite all regulations and threatened penalties under the Convention, is still being sold surreptitiously by the French traders in immense quantities, their physical condition has of late gone from bad to worse. "The ravages of strong drink among Europeans are dreadful enough, but for native races it means absolute extinction. One of the objects of the Condominium was to save the natives from this terrible curse. On the British side the Administration puts down with a strong hand the sale of intoxicants to natives, and it promptly executes all judgments of the Joint Court against its own subjects; but not so the French."

And then Mr Paton, the writer of this severe condemnation of French officialdom, proceeds to quote a long list of examples whereby he proves the French traders are tacitly permitted to sell drink to the natives, and that neither fine nor imprisonment follow upon legal conviction after such offences.

Added to the mischief wrought by French traffickers in evil spirits, the practice of wearing clothes has also done something to injure further the waning physique of these Kanakas, whose males love to don European jerseys and trousers, and whose females, or *poppinées*, fancy themselves in long loose frocks of gaudy colours. Naturally disinclined to bathe or wash themselves, these dusky naked savages in past generations trusted to the sunshine and the tropical rains to perform the necessary operations of cleansing their glabrous skins. But nowadays sun and air cannot penetrate the filthy greasy garments that, once donned by the wearer, are never removed, a new vesture being merely worn on top of the old one. Loathsome sores and rashes, and not infrequently galloping consumption, result from this silly adoption of civilised garb by a wholly uncivilised and ignorant race ; and if this foolish and often fatal habit of wearing clothes be really due (as is sometimes alleged) to the influence of the many Protestant missionaries, then those worthies stand guilty of a very serious crime equally against true decency and against common-sense. In any case an outbreak of Asiatic plague under such promising conditions must necessarily mean a partial extermination of the Kanakas in these islands. With such reflections, therefore, I consoled myself for my enforced sojourn on board the *Pacifique*, the while I carefully examined with my field-glasses all the details of the trumpery little capital, the many plantations of coco-palms, the crops of millet and cotton, the fields of coffee and the groves of bananas, which fringed the fore-

shore ; whilst behind them lay steep hills covered with dense forests of a vivid green that reminded me of the woodlands in my native land of Wales. It also afforded me some degree of amusement to learn from a young Australian trader, who came alongside our steamer in a small native boat, that Vila was the d—dest, dullest, dirtiest hole of a (adjective) place he had ever set his (adjective) feet in !

The scenery of Meli Bay was more or less typical, so far as I could judge, of all the islands of this group. By the water's edge lie the coco-palm groves and the little strips of cultivation, with their background of wild pathless tropical Bush. It is, of course, the coco-nut that is the chief source of wealth here, as in the other South Sea Islands, for these nuts yield the valuable copra which has now become the chief export of Polynesia. Copra is the dried flesh of the coco-nut, scraped out from the enclosing shell, and it is principally used in the manufacture of soap (an article of which the New Hebridean natives stand sadly in need !). Copra is also used in a variety of other ways, including (it is said) the preparation of the best Dorset butter. The sweetish sickly odour of the copra on board seemed never to leave my nostrils for a moment, sometimes in conjunction with the aromatic scent of raw sandal-wood, of which we carried a large supply on deck.

Beyond these small cultivated areas along the coast rise range upon range of hills, all of them swathed in impenetrable forest, in many places descending from the sky-line right down to the mangrove scrub beside the ocean. These virgin forests consist of tall trees shrouded in festoons of creepers and vines of the most brilliant green, a few of them bearing masses of white or purple flowers, which afforded some relief to the universal and monotonous greenery. How it poured and blew at intervals during that long day spent in Meli Bay ! The Hebrides

of old Scotland could not have appeared more vague in outline or more humid than these, their tropical namesakes of the Southern ocean. Wisps of vapour floated continuously in the warm moist atmosphere, and now and again discharged a sweeping, hissing shower that washed our dirty decks, and drenched the perspiring coppery skins of our poor hard-worked Kanaka crew, who had here to face all the additional labour entailed by unloading in port without any local help.

Sailing from Vila at some hour in the night watches, we found ourselves next morning anchored in an open roadstead close to the shore of the island of Epi, where there was no village, not even a planter's house in sight, but merely a small sandy beach, some coco-nut groves and a large shed near the waterside, filled with sacks of the precious brown copra, that had to be conveyed in barges to the vessel's side. Huge bunches of excellent bananas were here brought on board, and for a shilling I purchased one of these fruit-laden boughs. Next morning, which was happily sunny and clear, the *Pacifique* entered Port Sandwich, an inlet of the large central island of Malekula, or Mallicolo, a spot that owns historical interest as one of Captain Cook's landing-places, which that navigator named *more suo*, in honour of his patron, Lord Sandwich. Port Sandwich appeared a veritable fairyland with its land-locked haven and its steep densely wooded mountains, whose forms were reflected with wonderful clarity in the placid waters. Close to the shore, where numbers of naked savages were engaged in spearing fish in the shallows, stretched long lines of coco-palm groves that showed a rich golden-yellow against the encroaching verdure. Facing the entrance of this little harbour towered the great conical peak of volcanic Ambryn, rising majestically from the blue water, and with its summit veiled in light wreaths of smoky vapour.

In addition to its many natural beauties, Port Sandwich possesses some strategic advantages to recommend it to mariners, and these latter Captain Cook was not slow to recognise. "This harbour," so he writes in his Journal, "which is situated on the N.E. side of Mallicolo, not from far the S.E. end, I named Port Sandwich. It lies in S.W. by S. about one league, and is one-third of a league broad. A reef of rocks extends out a little way from each point; but the channel is of a good breadth, and hath in it from forty to twenty-four fathoms of water. In the port the depth of water is from twenty to four fathoms; and it is so sheltered that no winds can disturb a ship at anchor there. Another great advantage is, you can lie so near the shore as to cover your people that may be at work upon it."

This last-named advantage at once arose to the quick mind of the famous navigator, who was the first European seaman to approach these savage islands since the almost mythical visit of the Spanish admiral, Don Quiros, some two hundred years before. For Captain Cook found the natives of Malekula almost as pugnacious and intractable as they remain to-day, despite half-a-century of enforced trading and missionising; so that the great British seaman's unflattering account of the Malekulans in 1774 remains substantially true of their descendants at the present day.

"In general they are the most ugly, ill-proportioned people I ever saw, and in every respect different from any we had met with in this sea. They are a very dark-coloured and rather diminutive race; with long heads, flat faces, and monkey countenances. Their hair, mostly black or brown, is short and curly, but not quite so soft or woolly as that of a negro. Their beards are very strong, crisp and bushy, and generally black and short. But what most adds to their deformity is a belt, or cord, which they wear round their waist, and tie so tight over

the belly, that the shape of their bodies is not unlike that of an overgrown pismire. The men go quite naked, except a piece of cloth or leaf used as a wrapper. We saw but few women, and they were not less ugly than the men."

Nevertheless, from an anthropological standpoint, this island of Malekula, the second in size of the whole group, is by far the most important. It is about seventy miles long and some twenty miles broad on the average ; yet its interior has rarely been traversed by white men, and indeed remains even to-day almost wholly unexplored and unknown. For its leafy fastnesses are never penetrated by Europeans, save on the very rare occasion of a punitive expedition ; as, for instance, at notorious Sou' West Bay in 1905, when a small force of sailors and marines under Commander D'Oyly of the *Pegasus* forced a way into the Bush up the narrow streamlet tracks, and finally burnt the forest stronghold of Bilyas, about ten miles from the coast. The Malekulans differ greatly from the denizens of the other islands in their physique, customs and modes of worship ; whilst the few persons who have studied the natives intelligently here declare that some very marked and interesting variations occur even amongst the Malekulans themselves. The population is vaguely computed at ten thousand, but in reality the figures given are mere guesswork ; nor has the common report concerning the existence of a tribe of dwarfs in the central forest lands of the island ever been confirmed by travellers. The average Malekulan is short, dirty, cunning, malicious, revengeful and treacherous ; he is also a cannibal ; and except in the neighbourhood of the coastal mission stations he goes practically stark naked, " clothed in his native impudence and a cartridge-belt." For, thanks to the anomalous and unsatisfactory political status of the New Hebrides, of which I have already spoken, this unlovely and unlovable

savage is permitted the free use of fire-arms, which he usually carries loaded and at full cock. In addition to his musket, the Malekulan cannibal often carries his own native spears or arrows, tipped with a virulent poison that is extracted from rotting human flesh; so that this noble savage still stalks about his native forests doubly caparisoned with the weapons of advanced civilisation and of antique barbarism. No wonder the trader, and even the self-confident missionary, wax a little faint-hearted at the idea of looking in at a Malekulan village for the sake of barter or prayer. These cannibals, therefore, maintain their practical independence, in spite of the combined might (in this case jointly worth very little) of Britain and France; and though the Malekulan is evidently a singularly disagreeable black brother, yet I myself cannot but accord him my warm congratulations in having thus asserted, and asserted successfully, his native independence and impudence against all the forces of encroaching modern progress. He is shrewd, too, is this not very powerful savage; and possibly his present-day wariness is partly due to his long memory of the evil days of "blackbirding," or of kidnapping Kanakas from these islands for the Christian planters of Queensland. For the New Hebrides once formed a favourite haunt of the slave ships owned and manned by Christian Englishmen, what time our cruisers were diligently running down the dhows of the naughty Arab slave-dealers off the coast of Zanzibar. No, the aborigines of Malekula are not nice people, I admit; yet somehow I felt sorry when I learned from various persons on board who knew the island, what is, I fear, only the truth—that the native population is decreasing rapidly owing to the illicit sale of spirits, the constant inter-tribal warfare, the practices of infanticide and cannibalism, and the terrible lack of personal cleanliness. One peculiar characteristic, however,

the Malekulans share with all the other inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, no matter how high or how low may be their rank in the long scale of human development; and that is the absolute indifference wherewith they regard the inevitable, and in many cases rapid, extinction of their race, and their firm refusal to study the eugenics necessary to recover their racial vitality. And this unfortunate trait appears to be equally marked in the handsome Fijian, the intelligent Maori, the warlike Kanaka, and the savage Malekulan.

Quitting all too early the calm loveliness of Port Sandwich, and coasting in a fresh breeze along the forest-clad headlands of Malekula the Mysterious, we sailed northward towards Santo Espiritu, the largest island of the group. Ere long we were steaming between the flat densely wooded islands of Aore and Tutuba, and thence passed into the long narrow winding straits between Santo and Aore, known as the Canal de Ségonde, wherein the tide often rushes with a dangerous velocity. Near the mouth of the Sarakata River, that flows down from the unexplored fastnesses of the interior of Santo and here stains the waters to a dull yellow, we sighted the French pontoon, which does duty as a floating storehouse and post office, and also (it is rumoured) plies a roaring trade in selling rum to the childish savages of Santo and Aore, whose numbers are fast declining, thanks to drink, dirt and disease. Near the evil-looking pontoon there lay awaiting our arrival no small array of boats and cutters belonging to the local planters, in anxious expectation of the overdue *Pacifique* with their mails and with much desired news of the distant world of white men. Amongst this heterogeneous mass of craft there was pointed out to me that trim little launch, the *Snark*, wherein the author Jack London had recently crossed the Pacific Ocean, and which was now the property of Monsieur

Briault, a prominent French planter in Aore. Beneath a grey lowering sky, with dull turbid waters and flat pathless forests for a landscape, and with the sight of the ugly pontoon of sinister repute swaying in the current, methought I had never before visited so remote, so isolated, so melancholy a spot as this dismal outpost of French colonisation in the "Never, Never" of the New Hebrides.

The following dawn broke fine and sunny, and as we gently steamed along the winding Canal de Ségonde I found the slow-moving panorama of these vast "woods beyond the world" most impressive. All day we proceeded on a long narrow ribband of blue water, through the very heart of dense impenetrable forests on either hand, that were only relieved here and there by a few coco-nut groves—mere scratches of cultivation at the edge of the vast leafy wilderness. Most oppressive was the sense of silence and lifelessness; not a bird sang, not a beast howled, not an insect chirruped; even at the sunset hour the spell of utter silence continued unbroken. From time to time the *Pacifique* cast anchor opposite to some French colonist's plantation—practically all the planters here seemed to be French subjects—and remained stationary until our barges had gone and returned with their loads of copra for the hold. With my glasses I could easily distinguish the plants on the shore, from the pale yellow blossoms of the cotton bushes to the magnificent fronds of the palm-ferns, that thrust their bright green coronals above the struggling scrub. Great rents here and there in the forests disclosed tinkling rills and spray-wetted vegetation, amid which were conspicuous the huge leaves of the wild *taro*. Now and again a sudden whiff of overpowering sweetness filled the air, and this perfume was due, so I was told, to the ylang-ylang trees which were then in bloom in the far recesses of the forests.

I was interested to note that the paw-paw, to my mind one of the nicest of all tropical fruits, grew practically wild in the clearings near the shore ; and I was able to obtain a sack-load of them by paying a few pence, not, it was explained to me, in payment for the fruit itself, which has no commercial value here, but for the Kanaka's trouble in picking them and bringing them to the steamer. The paw-paw, or mammee-apple, grows in clusters on a rather handsome palm-like shrub ; the fruit is pale green or yellow, and of the size and shape of a moderate-sized vegetable-marrow. It has luscious orange-hued flesh, like that of a melon, but with a peculiar spicy flavour ; also its many brown pips contain pepsin and consequently assist a weak digestion. Eaten with salt and pepper, with the addition of a few drops of fresh lime juice to correct its intense sweetness, I consider a good paw-paw superior to the finest melon.

Thus passed a singularly interesting day, ending with a beautiful sunset, whose rosy glow penetrated into the leafy caverns around and lit up the distant peak of the island of Malo far to westward. After dusk we threaded our way leisurely down the Canal de Ségonde once more towards the open sea, and at sunrise next day the rocky coast of Efate was in full view, with a far-away peep of the volcano of Tanna, from which latter island in the old days were decoyed many of the " black boys " that worked in the Queensland sugar-fields, so much so that the name " Tommy Tanna " is sometimes applied jocosely to the Australian Kanakas as a class.

Before noon we were once more at anchor, within a stone's-throw of a sandy beach of the Bay of Meli, and only distant a few miles from Vila, which was hidden from our sight by an intervening promontory. Here also beautiful forests feathered down to the beach, which was fringed with the picturesque

pandanus palm that has bunches of spiky leaves and queer exposed roots resembling a mass of stilts. Close to our anchorage lay a tiny islet occupied by one of the Protestant missions, whose cramped surface was absolutely packed with Kanaka humanity, for owing to various causes some four hundred natives are now inhabiting this isolated and secure sanctuary. I myself counted over fifty of their primitive catamarans, or dug-out boats with an outrigger, drawn up on the sandy beach, and these were constantly in use, for the Kanaka men and women kept passing to and fro in these frail craft between their island home and the mainland. These people were hideous, wild-eyed human apes in appearance, exhibiting in their faces neither intelligence nor good humour. Being refugees of a mission station, all these folk were necessarily clothed, the men in gaudy jerseys and blue dungaree trousers, and the *poppinées* wearing loose shifts of purple or scarlet. The bright tints of their clothing, their black skins and their bleached and strangely dressed hair certainly supplied plenty of colour to the scene, as these natives paddled around our steamer in their catamarans, either carrying loads of fruit and taros, or else dragging through the water the seasoned planks that our ship had brought hither, and that seem to be one of the chief Australian commercial imports to these well-timbered islands. At sunset the *Pacifique* weighed anchor and left for Vila, where we spent the night, starting next morning for the return voyage to Noumea. After passing the group of the Loyalty Islands at dusk, next morning we were once more steaming through the clear calm waters within the New Caledonian coral reef, past the splendid scenery I have already described, and by noon we had reached the port of Noumea, where I learned to my relief that I should be allowed to go ashore, despite "la peste."



Noumea Harbour



Street in Noumea

NEW CALEDONIA & NEW HEBRIDES 199

Noumea is a dirty, dusty, down-at-heel city, but withal marvellously picturesque in its exquisite setting and lovely views. The houses, with their wide pillared verandahs, their tall latticed casements, and their gay gardens, presented a most cheerful appearance, in strong contrast with the air of listless depression that hung over the whole community owing to the continued presence of the plague. For its ravages in their midst still remained the universal subject of discussion amongst the indignant and terrified citizens of "the polychrome town of Noumea," as an Australian poet has aptly described this place with its mixed population of whites, blacks, browns and half-breeds in endless variety. The infected area, which included the quays, had been railed off from the rest of the town by long barricades of planks and corrugated iron, containing only two exits, whereat fussy French officials, aided by self-important Kanaka policemen, stopped every pedestrian in order to squirt some antiseptic fluid over boots and lower garments, before the permission to pass was granted. At nine at night these two outlets were closed and guarded; moreover, a colossal penalty was threatened against any bold bad person who should dare to violate this cordon between nine P.M. and daybreak; although, as a matter of fact, this illegal feat was easily performed by more than one of my acquaintances on board ship, who chanced to find themselves belated on the farther side of the flimsy barrier.

As the whole place lay, as it were, under a sanitary interdict, I had to content myself with long solitary walks amongst the barren hills and rocky valleys behind the city. Never have I seen, even in Australia, soil so parched and sunburnt, or herbage so yellow and shrivelled, or such hopeless thickets of the hated *lantana* weed, as I found in the outlying districts of Noumea. The rampant *lantana*, I was told, had been introduced not

many years before into this island, where it had hitherto been unknown, by some foolish old Frenchman who had taken a fancy to this floral pest and cultivated it in his garden, whence it had escaped and spread in all directions ! Bare and brown though the soil showed everywhere, the glorious views of sea and mountain compensated for the lack of verdure ; whilst at my feet, far below, lay the pretty straggling little city embowered in palms, mangoes and scarlet flame-trees.

In the centre of the town is the Place des Cocotiers, planted with the elegant coco-palm, and with avenues of sweet-scented mimosa and of the gorgeous flame-tree, or ponciana, which in this month of November made a marvellous display of scarlet blossom against the clear hot blue sky. In the middle of this space is a bandstand, wherein, until recent years, a well-trained orchestra composed of convicted musicians from the Île Nou were wont on certain days to discourse really excellent music to the citizens, many of whom probably regret the abolition of these bizarre open-air concerts. Working in the streets, under the direction of the sanitary inspectors, were chained gangs of unhappy convicts with shrunken figures and wizened, despairing faces, all of them dressed in dismal coarse grey linen suits and wearing huge ungainly straw hats. Portly French warders, carrying pistols in their belts and parasols in their hands, stood around with a languid air, whilst Kanaka orderlies of fierce aspect and armed with truncheons supervised these poor outcasts of French humanity. I remember to have read in some book of travel in New Caledonia an authentic incident, which the author himself saw, with regard to the discipline of these convict gangs. Once, in the country outside Noumea, he suddenly perceived one of these miserable wretches bolt from his squad and make a rush for freedom towards a neighbouring thicket. But long before the defaulter had reached the friendly

shadow of the Bush the plump little sergeant on duty had tossed aside his sunshade and with perfect composure raised his revolver and disabled the runaway in the leg. There is little or no chance of escape for the unhappy occupants of the Île Nou.

For myself, I could never make up my mind to cross the harbour and to visit what is still the recognised sight of Noumea, the penal station of the Île Nou, in order to satisfy my curiosity with regard to the poor prisoners, their unappetising food, their dark punishment cells, their guillotine and their executioner, and all the attendant horrors of a French bagnio, that is happily doomed to disappear wholly in the course of the next few years. The late casual spectacle of the convict's unspeakable misery and public humiliation in the streets of the capital was quite sufficient to quench any nascent curiosity on my part. At the time of my visit the chief attraction to the tourist at the Île Nou was a glimpse of a certain unfortunate fellow-creature in the official hospital there, who had not long before attempted to escape to the mainland by swimming across the harbour, in whose waters he had been badly mauled by a shark, during his feverish attempt to gain what at the best could only have been temporary liberty. The poor mangled creature was then being tended and nursed, in order that on his partial recovery he might be duly tried and sentenced to the punishment cells for his late dash for freedom. The only memento I brought back with me from Noumea was, however, a number of the ornamented nautilus shells, the handiwork of the convicts, who first soften the hard shining surface of the shell and then engrave designs thereon with the aid of a clasp-knife. A very few francs will purchase a pair of these handsome souvenirs, which represent many hours of patient toil.

Noumea possesses a good public library and a museum, which

are housed in a fine building with broad balconies. The museum portion of this institution contains a large number of New Caledonian curios and weapons, certainly not well kept, but many of them of particular interest to the anthropologist and the naturalist. I shall never forget the gruesome aspect of one of the many native idols that I noticed ensconced in a dark corner of the corridor. The deity in question had a malign visage of carved black wood, an enormous black chignon and a robe of black feathers, the only colouring being contained in the staring orbs of "cat's eye" shells, which are shining green with broad white rims, and in the awful mouth formed of scarlet berries. I have seen a goodly selection of these horrible South Sea effigies at various times and places, but never anything comparable in repulsiveness with this sable deity preserved at Noumea. Besides the cheery-looking idols and the spears and canoes were collections of lovely local shells and of the fauna of the island. Among these latter were included some dusty, moth-eaten specimens of the cagou, the unique native pigeon which has been adopted to some extent as the official emblem of New Caledonia, since its picture appears on all the postal stamps of the colony. The cagou is a tall handsome bird, not unlike the better-known crowned pigeon of New Guinea, for it has soft greyish-blue plumage, red eyes and long red legs. The male sports a beautiful crown of delicate lace-like plumes, and similar feathers in his tail, which he spreads on suitable occasions, after the manner of the peacock; the hen bird offers a less ornate appearance than her lord. In the cases of mouldering insects, always to me so sad and squalid a memorial of wanton destruction, I studied specimens of the local butterflies, which, as is the case in Australia, are not remarkable for size, variety or brilliance of colour. The most noticeable amongst them was a handsome swallow-tailed

butterfly, with large wings of iridescent purple, which I had already observed during my country rambles outside Noumea.

After three days' tarrying in this lovely but pestilence-stricken spot, the *Pacifique* started on her return journey to Sydney. On emerging from the calm waters of the reef, and leaving behind us the tall solitary tower of the lighthouse that stands erect like the derelict column of some former temple to Neptune in the watery waste, we encountered rough seas and cold windy weather. I was glad to sight the long low line of the New South Wales coast on the fourth day, and still more glad was I when we passed into the shelter of Sydney Harbour. Here we had to undergo a strict visitation of the quarantine officials in Watson's Bay, and passed an anxious hour awaiting the verdict of the doctor, for we had come direct from a plague-infested port, so that the miseries of an enforced detention in quarantine at the North Head were looming before me. All of our crew were drawn up for close inspection—the jolly, grinning Kanakas, the puny Arab firemen, the French stewards and servants—and, much to my relief, none of them owned to an ache or a pain between them. We were therefore permitted to steam up the harbour, and to land in due course at the wharf belonging to the *Messageries Maritimes*.

X

SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

IN order to visit Queensland, I left Sydney by the smart little Japanese liner, the *Nikko Maru*, of six thousand tons, belonging to the Nippon Yusen Kaisha Line, and had a pleasant passage to Brisbane over calm waters and sunny seas. Once past Sydney Heads there is little of interest on this two days' voyage, though the boat often approached fairly near to the coast-line—everywhere the same sandy dunes and beaches, and the same featureless rolling hills thickly covered with gum-forests of sombre hue, with an occasional peak of the New England ranges rising behind them to westward. After dusk the many Bush fires that were then raging unchecked in these forests offered a fine spectacle, as the conflagration threw its lurid glare over sky and sea. Life on board a Japanese vessel afforded an agreeable experience to the novice; there was a certain air of daintiness that was observable in many ways; the very menu cards of the meals were in themselves master-pieces of artistic simplicity with their devices of a maple leaf, a waterfall, a peony, or an iris. It was amusing to watch the Japanese sailors and firemen with their sturdy brown legs and sandalled feet come out of the fo'c'sle to enjoy the cool of the evening; wrapped in gaudy cotton kimonos, they strolled and chatted and smoked endless cigarettes.

The entrance into Moreton Bay, which serves as the outer harbour to Brisbane, is not imposing, and here too the sea loses its clarity and becomes opaque. As we slowly entered the

mouth of the Brisbane River, for the first time I perceived the long marshy flats covered with clumps or stray bushes of the dark dreary dirt-encrusted mangroves. The mangrove always flourishes with its roots in the mud of the tidal flats or river-banks, and is an universal feature of all tropical coast scenery. At this particular season of the year, the month of October, these dismal trees were thickly covered with bunches of the small white blossoms. This tree represents all that is sickly and repellent along a tropical foreshore, and an Australian poet gives a gloomy but scarcely exaggerated picture of the melancholy, snake-haunted mangrove swamps that fringe all parts of the Queensland coast :

“ The long roots writhing upward from the mud,
Like fingers crooked in lust, or pain, or greed,
Have pendent tresses of putrescent weed,
Like dead men’s hair clogged stiff with their own blood.
No light of flowers, no songs of birds dispel
The breathless stealthy silence of the place ;
Only a ripple o’erspreads the water’s face
At times, like soundless dreadful mirth in Hell.
Only the grey mists come and go beneath
The pallid shadows of the sickly moon ;
Only dead voices in the night breeze croon
A drear and melancholy masque of death.”

As we steamed slowly up the broad tidal stream of the Brisbane river, we encountered dense masses of zoophytes of a bright violet tint, differing wholly in appearance from the huge yellow jelly-fishes that haunt the waters of Sydney Harbour. Arrived at the wharf of Pinkenba—locally nicknamed Stinkin’-bar, on account of the highly odoriferous meat works in its vicinity—we duly disembarked, and on landing had the pleasure of a two hours’ wait beneath a broiling sun, in the hurricane of a hot westerly wind, and in an atmosphere of

dust, flies and stench, until a belated train at length appeared to bear us to Brisbane, about fourteen miles away.

Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, is by no means unworthy of its official choice as the premier city and the seat of Government in what is perhaps the most interesting and naturally the richest of the six States of the Commonwealth. Originally founded as a penal colony, and known as the Moreton Bay Settlement, under Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane, it was not till the latter half of the past century that the odious stigma of felony was removed from the town. In spite of the claims of neighbouring Ipswich, Brisbane was finally selected for the capital of the new State that was now lopped from unwieldy New South Wales, and the subsequent rapid progress of the city has amply justified the early decision in its favour. Brisbane, which at the present time owns a population of about one hundred and fifty thousand, occupies the finest site of any city in Australia, Sydney alone excepted; and in due course it certainly seems destined to expand into an immense, and (let us hope) a beautiful metropolis. The noble river winds in the form of the letter S, between steep rocky banks, its deep bed permitting vessels of large tonnage to anchor at the wharfs in the heart of the business quarter. With only a moderate outlay of public money a magnificent river drive could be constructed along the curving banks of the Brisbane, ending at the entrance of the lovely wild reserve of Coot-tha Park, whose bosky ranges are visible from the streets of the city. This broad river is spanned by a fine bridge, which connects the city with its large suburb of South Brisbane, and was erected to replace a former less pretentious and also less secure structure that was bodily swept away by the overwhelming flood of 1893—a disaster on a scale so colossal that

at the time pessimists declared the future prosperity of Brisbane was doomed.

The public buildings are remarkably fine and spacious, having been planned (very properly) with an eye to the needs of the future, rather than merely to meet the requirements of the present day. The Lands Office in George Street is a splendid Renaissance palace of beautiful proportions; the Public Library is a good piece of Palladian architecture; the domed Customs House affords a most picturesque landmark at the bend of the river opposite to the long strip of land known as Kangaroo Point; whilst on a steep cliff above the Customs House stands the unfinished but very impressive mass of the new Anglican cathedral-church of St John's. This last-named building, when completed according to Mr Pearson's admirable design, will certainly be reckoned by impartial judges as the finest gothic edifice in all Australia, and its commanding site has been excellently chosen.

The peninsula opposite to Kangaroo Point is occupied partly by the State Parliament House and the new University, of which Old Government House now forms a portion, and by the Botanic Gardens, a delightful shady retreat that is comparatively free from the eternal dust which is whirled everywhere by the constant wind. Here, as at Sydney, I was much interested in noting the familiar garden flowers of home growing in juxtaposition with the gorgeous plants of the tropics; luxuriant masses of stocks and sweet-peas flowering freely beside brilliant cannas and pointsettias, and with the fresh green leaves of the British oaks contrasting agreeably with the purple glories of the stately jacaranda tree. This latter, which is in reality a native of the East Indies, is one of the floral show-sights of Queensland, where it is often planted in long avenues which offer a perfect dream of beauty when

viewed against a background of deep blue sky, the clusters of the purple blossoms on the naked boughs overhead being reflected, as it were, in warm pools of colour on the dusty brown earth beneath, that is covered thick with the fallen blooms. Speaking of flowers, I was also amused to note that the commonest weed in and around Brisbane, clothing every waste piece of ground or neglected garden, was the pretty blue-grey ageratum, which makes so popular a bedding-out plant in our gardens at home.

Queen Street, the principal shopping thoroughfare of the city, is wide, gay and well thronged, and it has also many good shops with the attractively dressed windows that are noticeable in all the large cities of Australia. Here and there I espied a few surviving buildings of the old Moreton Bay Settlement days, awaiting their imminent removal under the sweeping hand of civic progress ; but the only relic of any real historical interest I could discover was the Observatory in Wickham Terrace, which was originally a windmill constructed some sixty years ago by convict labour and of late years adapted to its present use.

A letter of introduction from a Queensland friend to Mr Knowles, one of the leading opal merchants of Brisbane, procured me a most interesting examination of many examples of what is essentially *the* precious stone of the many gems that are found in this State. As packet after packet, each containing opals more and more fascinating, was opened before my astonished eyes, I grew to marvel at the surpassing beauty and variety of this unique stone, of which only the "milky" or light-coloured opal seems to be much affected for ornament at home. And yet I think there can be no two opinions as to the relative values of the common milky opal and the so-called "black" opal of Queensland. The latter, which possesses

endless gradations of form and hue, is undoubtedly a dark-coloured stone, though its prevailing tints are iridescent green and violet, recalling the lustrous tints of the peacock's tail. Somewhere amidst these strong shifting colours, deep down in the heart of the gem, a ruddy spark of fire reveals itself fitfully, so as to remind the gazer that these splendid stones are also classed as "fire opals." The cut and polished gems are sold by weight, and the price asked in Brisbane struck me as being very moderate; but of course "black" opals are already rising in value, like everything else in this transitory world that is worth acquiring. I was told that a large percentage of the opals brought for sale into Brisbane is due to the exertions of shearers in the off-season, during which period these men ransack the wild regions of the west that are known as "the opal country." Some fine yellow sapphires, chiefly produced by the mines of Anakie in North Queensland, were also shown me; but I must confess I never could admire greatly these orange and lemon tinted stones, which always seem to my uninitiated eye as being little superior to the ordinary yellow topaz.

I have already stated, and with absolute truth, that Brisbane is a handsome city, or rather that it foreshadows a fine city in the near future; yet in one important particular it falls short of modern requirements in this age of hygiene. Brisbane owns many hotels, most of them nasty and none of them cheap, and these hostelries are veritable whitewashed sepulchres to the unwary traveller. Externally they appear fine pretentious buildings with broad balconies and cool halls, whilst the fare served is as a rule both good and abundant; but oh, those dirty bedrooms and unkempt bathrooms! You ascend by a carpeted stairway and continue along a carpeted corridor—carpets being wholly superfluous in such a climate—and then

you are shown into a miserable, unswept, frowzy bedchamber, with ragged bed-linen, a coverlet black with age and neglect, and with a grimy dusty mosquito net hanging over the pillows. Flies, fleas, mosquitoes and even worse members of the verminous world thrive in this suitable environment ; so that the chance visitor is often only too thankful to escape from Brisbane with all speed, when he has to face the nocturnal horrors of its hotels. Equally dirty and uncared for appears the bathroom ; and as for sewerage, there is none. In this respect, Brisbane may pleasantly recall to the more romantically minded the domestic ways of Old Madrid or of the Paris of Manon Lescaut ; but most persons will be surprised and disgusted with such a state of things sanitary in a capital city in the twentieth century. I myself was only too rejoiced to beat a hasty retreat from an expensive hotel in the lower part of the town, and to migrate to a newly erected boarding-house in airy Wickham Terrace, where at a far lower tariff I obtained both cleanliness and comfort.

One of the chief sights of the neighbourhood of Brisbane is the summit of One Tree Hill, which rises at the near end of the large national park of Coot-tha. By taking a tram to Toowong cemetery, one can lose oneself in the depths of the Bush within half-an-hour of leaving crowded Queen Street, and can follow a woodland track with naught save the everlasting gum-trees for company. It was during a prolonged spell of drought that I first made my way hither, when the undergrowth was dry as tinder and scarcely a flower or a green plant survived. The sunny clearings were, however, alive with innumerable gauzy-winged butterflies, chiefly black, white and iridescent purple in their colouring ; and as I watched these great insects hovering over the few remaining everlastings that had managed to defy the heat and the drought, I was keenly

reminded of Robert Browning's descriptive lines of the Italian summer :

“ Wherever some hardy rock flower
Thrust its yellow face up,
For the prize were great butterflies fighting,
Some six to each cup.”

It was a stiff pull uphill on so warm a morning, but when I had once attained the summit I found cool delicious air and a wide-reaching view over river, forest, mountain and ocean ; the whole horizon being bathed in the misty azure haze that is so characteristically Australian. Below me lay Brisbane itself, regally bestriding the broad river that glistened like silver in the fierce sunlight ; whilst in the middle distance there appeared conspicuous, as a suitable *memento mori* amid so fair a scene, the large cemetery of Toowong with its groups of white monuments. Far to eastward gleamed the waters of Moreton Bay, enclosed by its long flat islands ; and to southward, nestling amongst the bosky foot-hills, I could just descry the town of Ipswich. Indeed it was a strangely interesting landscape that until seventy years or so ago had been left practically untouched by the white races, being trodden only by the naked feet of a few bands of savages, who did little to disturb the ancient reign of the wild beasts and birds of primeval Australia. How they clashed in this fair setting of trees, and mountains, and waters both salt and sweet, the two opposing influences ! —that of primitive man and beast with only their primitive instincts of hunger and propagation, and of modern civilisation with its guns and its machinery and its lust for gold. The casual traveller is apt to forget, in contemplating such a scene as this, that he is gazing not only at *life*, whereby one may designate the pushing forward of the task of modern progress and settlement, but also the death-throes of an antique, half-

forgotten, half-passed savage world, which has been remorselessly dragged out of its sleep of centuries and is now being rapidly destroyed by a pitiless invading nation.

The shores of Moreton Bay, which lie within easy reach of the city, are somewhat spoiled, from the standpoint of pleasure-seekers, by the encroaching sand-flats, mostly clothed with hateful mangrove scrub, though here and there small watering-places have arisen amid these rather unpromising surroundings. Of these, Sandgate is the most popular, a little resort about twelve miles distant, and a very picturesque spot it is. There is a sandy beach, where children can play and paddle, and a pier whence grown-ups may bathe or fish; there is some hilly foreshore, dotted with native fig-trees and eucalypts, that are much resorted to by numbers of the pretty little green parakeets which love to feast on the aromatic blossoms of the gum-trees. On the afternoon that I visited Sandgate there was a strange brooding calm, so that the pale blue waters of the bay seemed turned into a sheet of glass, whereon one large white-winged yacht lay becalmed, looking like some huge water-logged butterfly that was vainly trying to escape. It was the ideal sea-calm of the artist or the poet, so that spontaneously the old lines rose to my memory, as I sate watching the peaceful scene before me :

“ As idle as a painted ship,
Upon a painted ocean.”

Across the bay one sees Woody Point on the mainland, another favourite picnic resort of Brisbanites; whilst directly opposite to Sandgate stretched the long low wooded form of Moreton Island, that acts as a barrier against the waters of the Pacific Ocean beyond. There was a splendid rose-pink sunset,

that served to glorify and etherealise even the dismal mud-flats and their long lines of mangroves.

The overland journey by rail from Brisbane to Maryborough takes about eight hours to accomplish the intervening one hundred and forty miles. Very soon after passing the suburban districts of the city, with their neat wooden houses raised on piles, their broad verandahs, and their adjacent patches of sugar-cane or pine-apples, the Bush begins, and in varying aspects continues the whole of the journey. From time to time small townships amid their encircling clearings are passed, and here are to be seen vegetable gardens and small orchards stocked with tropical fruit-trees, chiefly the banana and the dark-leaved mango trees that in October appear resplendent with their young scarlet shoots and spikes of creamy blossoms. As to the Bush scenery passed in the train, it seemed to vary from its wild primeval condition of gums and grass beneath them, to the land that is wholly cleared of its timber, where the charred stumps of the destroyed trunks stand up dismally like damaged tombstones in some vast cemetery that has lately been scorched by fire. From time to time one catches glimpses of the bullock teams, with their picturesque "bullockies," or drivers, in attendance, lean wiry figures with long stock-whips. The bullock teams, sometimes as many as nine yoke of oxen strong, used to be a characteristic feature of the Australian Bush, but the prosaic arrival of motor traffic is gradually ousting this former mode of conveyance, and huge motor lorries are being more and more used for purposes of heavy traction, even in very rough country.

About two hours after leaving Brisbane the curious Glass Mountains are approached. This small group of detached rocky peaks was so christened by the great Captain Cook

himself, who first descried them through his telescope from the deck of the *Endeavour* in Moreton Bay, when he judged their peculiar forms to resemble the garden bell-glasses then in vogue. Their isolated position in the heart of a region of tropical Bush renders these peaks very conspicuous landmarks. All are apparently sheer rock, one of them bearing a certain degree of resemblance to the Swiss Matterhorn in miniature; and all have recently been scaled by local climbers, so I was informed by a chance travelling companion. And, parenthetically, how kind and friendly one's fellow-passengers are as a rule throughout Australia! Of course I can only speak from a limited experience, but, speaking from that little, I should like to place on record how much I appreciated the help and information that were constantly being offered to a visitor from the Old Country. Again and again I have entered a railway carriage as a casual stranger amongst strangers, and have left it a few hours later amidst handshakes, invitations and God-speeds. "Smile at the world, and it will smile back at you in return" is nowhere shown to be a truer proverb than in Australian travel.

The Bush round the base of the Glass Mountains is extremely lovely. Here the tall straggling gum-trees are thickly interspersed with the "cabbage-tree" and the bangalow palms; numerous wild vines, including a convolvulus laden with masses of purple flowers, run riot over every branch; and near the hidden water-courses the rank vegetation shows of a vivid emerald-green. On the railway banks grew thousands of the curious grass-trees, or "Black-fellow's Spear"; there were some trees of the native baubinia, that bears large white or mauve blossoms not unlike the bell of a gladiolus, but possessing a sweet scent; whilst that gay but noxious weed, the lantana, with its variegated flower-heads, formed impenetrable thickets

beneath the palms. Occasionally a pool was sighted, the whole of its stagnant surface almost hidden by the leaves and blooms of the lovely Queensland water-lily, or rather lotos, whose mauve and purple flowers stand erect above the water. This fascinating belt of so-called palm scrub gives way only too quickly to the ordinary Bush scenery in its various stages of untouched nature or of human development, and continues thus till Gympie is reached.

As viewed from the train window, sweltering under a scorching sun and completely smothered in a thick mantle of grey dust, Gympie did not strike me as an attractive spot; but it is a thriving gold-mining centre, ranking second only in importance to Mount Morgan. It is one of the oldest of the Queensland gold-mining townships, for it was proclaimed as long ago as the year 1867, when it was first worked for its alluvial gold. The happy-go-lucky days of cradling and digging, of beggary and amassing, of grog-selling and lawlessness, have of course sunk into the limbo of the past; but as a reefing-field with profitable gold-bearing quartz, Gympie still attracts capital and prolongs its existence after other similar settlements have ceased to exist.

At Gympie station there is a half-hour's halt, wherein the traveller is invited, for a couple of shillings, to partake of a midday meal such as is deemed suitable to this climate, consisting, as it does, of burning hot soup, hot tough beef with soggy potatoes and cabbage, a steaming batter pudding and coarse local cheese, the whole repast being washed down with strong scalding tea. Refreshed in this mode, I continued my interrupted journey towards Maryborough through more Bush country, which is here distinguished by clumps of the graceful silky oak, a fine tree with grey feathery foliage and covered at this season with quantities of large spikes of a rich yellow

bloom. This is the *Grevillea robusta*, the chief member of an interesting genus that is peculiar to Australian soil. Nor does the utility of this handsome flowering tree fall below its ornament, for its wood has a remarkably beautiful grain and colour, somewhat similar to satin-wood, which I have seen used with good effect both for household and ecclesiastical furniture. In due time the train crossed the broad tidal stream of the Mary River, fringed by the inevitable belt of melancholy mangrove scrub, after which I soon reached my destination.

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Maryborough, with a population of about twelve thousand, is a port of some size, and has also sugar-mills, timber-yards and an iron-foundry, which latter gives employment to several hundred workmen and is justly regarded with special pride by the citizens. Good-sized steamers ply up and down the Mary River, which here makes a wide loop, the land thus surrounded being locally termed the "Pocket." It is a quiet, thriving place, and seems now to have wholly recovered its prosperity, which was temporarily checked by the terrible flood of 1893, when bridge, wharfs and suburbs were utterly wrecked, and the flood waters of the Mary reached to the upper floors of the houses in the principal streets. With Australian doggedness, all this serious damage was repaired ; a more secure bridge and better wharfs have been constructed, and the ruined suburbs have been rebuilt on safer sites. There is an air of tropical listlessness in Maryborough, and one gets to realise that it is situated at the gates of the actual tropics, on watching the country carts that come lumbering into the town with their loads of purple-stalked cane for the sugar-mills. A few loafing aborigines and Kanakas (natives of the South Sea Islands) impart a touch of colour to this white man's settlement, which is in reality an old place, as antiquity passes current in Australia,

proof of which can be noted in the many surviving cottages of early-day settlers. These are for the most part small wooden structures on an English model, roofed with shingles and having broad brick chimneys attached to their gable-ends. But most of the modern houses in Maryborough, and for that matter the generality of houses throughout Queensland, seem well adapted to the hot climate. These are practically all constructed of wood, and are supported on stout wooden piles some eight or nine feet high ; an arrangement that permits of a free circulation of air beneath, prevents ants or other insects from entering, and also protects the floors from the water that collects in stagnant puddles after the heavy tropical showers. The house itself is roofed with corrugated iron, and of the same prosaic but suitable material is the huge round cistern, or tank, which serves to collect the precious overflow of rain from the roof, and forms a prominent feature in every Australian homestead. Round the four sides of the house run broad verandahs, which give shelter equally in rain or sunshine. The living rooms are all lofty, and open into a central passage, so that the maximum of fresh air is obtained in hot weather, though usually the inhabitants spend most of their time on the verandah itself, only entering the inner rooms to sleep and eat ; indeed many persons in all parts of Australia sleep all the year round in the open air. Each homestead stands in its own compound, always ample, the enclosures of the richer residents being often over an acre in extent, and many of them being converted into charming pleasaunces. All vegetation thrives in this flat warm spot with marvellous luxuriance. Most of the verandahs are swathed in festoons of the passion-vine with its fruit and flowers, or of some creepers of the *Tecoma* genus with their gay trumpet-shaped blossoms, notably the gorgeous yellow "Cat's Claw," which makes masses of brilliant colour on all sides. Palms,

bamboos, bananas, silky oaks, bauhinias, jacarandas and flame-trees figure amongst the endless numbers of tropical trees ; whilst thick bushes of bright pink oleanders and thickets of purple or scarlet bougainvillea serve to adorn many a dusty compound. Here, too, flourishes the frangipani-tree, with its bunches of yellow and white blossoms that are unrivalled in their perfume. The frangipani is deciduous, and, on shedding its broad leaves, exhibits very fat stumpy little branches, a fact that has gained for this highly prized Oriental shrub in Australia the unromantic name of the "Sausage Tree." In the damp ditches, which must breed half the mosquitoes that form a continual pest in Maryborough, may be seen growing half-wild clumps of cannas and arum lilies, as well as plants of the crinum lily with its bedraggled-looking white blossoms.

There is pleasant society in Maryborough, which is ready to open its doors to the visitor, if he come properly introduced. All the men of the place are of course engaged in some sort of business or profession, and most of the ladies have sufficient domestic duties to keep them at home during the greater part of the day. But there are picnic parties and boating expeditions, tennis tournaments and dances, games of cricket and matches at bowls, with occasional shooting trips for the men in the Bush or the swamps. Most of the social life is, however, carried on of necessity in the evening hours, when the day's work is over. Everyone dines or rather "teas" about sunset, and as the night quickly follows the disappearance of the sun there are long hours to be passed before the time of retiring to bed. Then it is that people visit freely at each other's houses, to enjoy cards, or conversation, or music, followed by a light supper. Moonlight picnics, too, form a most agreeable and (to the British visitor) a novel feature in Australian social life in

a land where the daylight hours are often too hot for any sort of amusement or exercise.

About a mile from the town itself, and not far from the pretty gardens of the local hospital, there was, during the period of my visit, a small encampment of pure-blooded aboriginals, presumably the last remnant of the local tribe that until half-a-century ago had been wont to roam through this district as its undisputed lords and masters for countless generations. A visit to this camp afforded to my stranger's eye a sorry spectacle, offering food for very sad reflections. A few miserable booths, or "humpies," composed of pieces of bark or sheets of corrugated iron, fragments of sail-cloth and old tin cans formed the modern dwelling-houses of this dwindling tribe, now reduced to a couple of married women or "gins," and some half-dozen males. Three or four mongrel dogs, to which their black owners always exhibit a jealous attachment, guarded this dismal little hamlet in the sandy scrub-lands outside the suburbs of Maryborough. The poor creatures were by no means ill-favoured in spite of their black skins, though their caricature of civilised dress and their squalid surroundings did much to detract from any natural advantages they possessed. Their expression was pleasing; their features were tolerable; their manners were graceful, especially those of the women, who appeared fairly cheerful and communicative, talking good English in the soft melancholy tones that the black-fellow always assumes. But the husband of one of the women, a man of middle age, seemed too oppressed and languid to take much notice of myself and my companion, a former police magistrate who has had a lifelong experience of Australian Bush life. The poor fellow gave his replies civilly enough, but he kept his head constantly averted from our eyes, affecting to take no interest in our

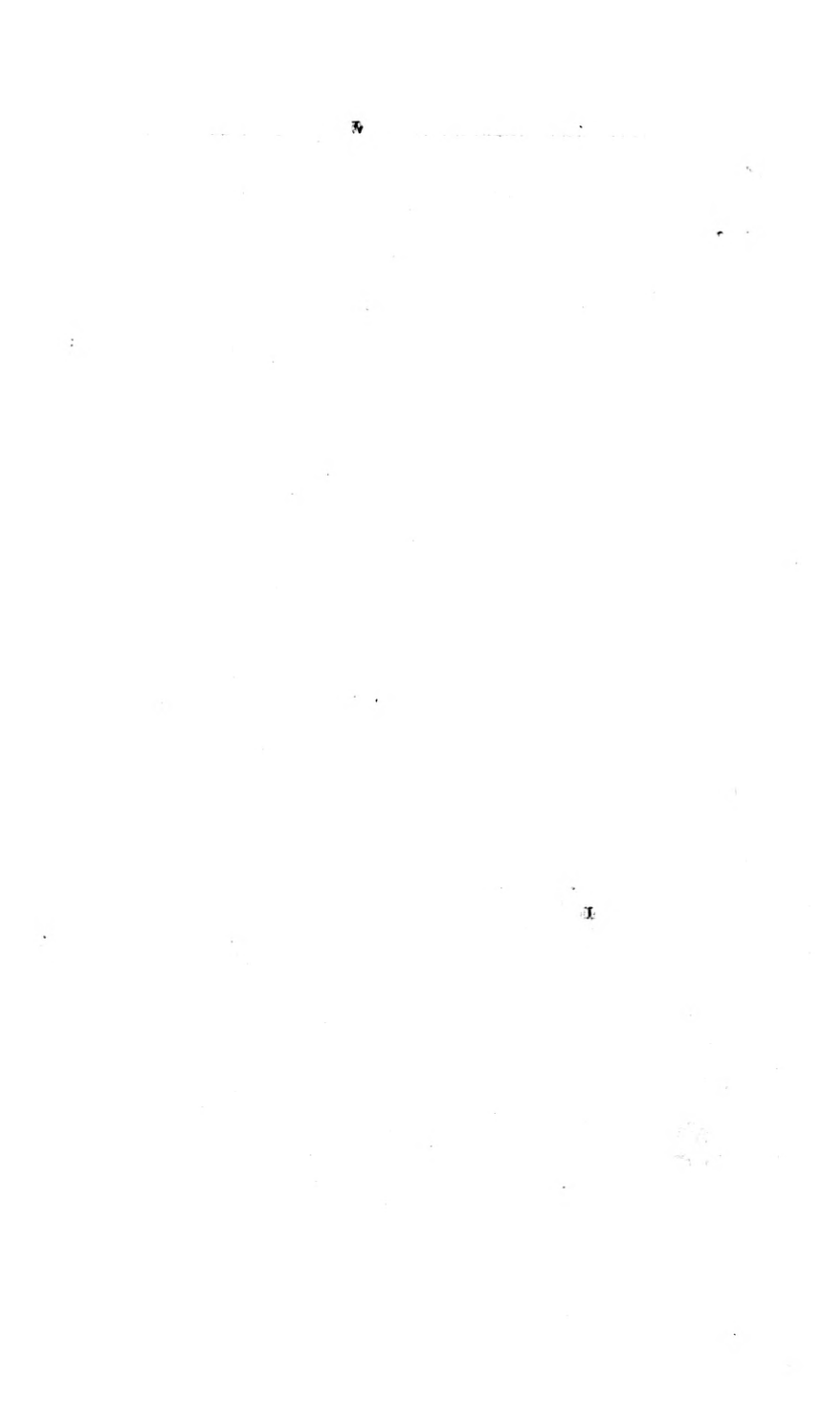
presence beyond what politeness absolutely demanded. To my mind there was something infinitely pathetic in the whole scene, and in the haunting thought that this handful of decadent, ill-clothed savages, with their pitiful travesty of modern garments, formed the last survivors of one of those tribes of active, well-grown warriors who almost in our own generation owned and hunted all this region of Queensland. Two younger men to whom we also spoke spend most of the day cadging for small errands amongst the townfolk of Maryborough, for which they get a trifling recompense either in money, or in "tucker"; often with their small earnings they try to obtain the forbidden glass of beer or spirits, which a benevolent Government at least nominally denies to these unhappy descendants of the ancient over-lords of the Australian Bush.

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Returning to Brisbane, I proceeded later to Toowoomba, which is just one hundred miles farther west, and is reached in four hours' time by taking the morning express for Sydney. The line passes through a well-developed country as far as Ipswich, a thriving provincial town that was gay with masses of purple jacarandas in bloom, and continues through partially cleared Bush as far as Helidon, where there is a halt, so as to partake of the popular cup of tea and scone, without which refreshment no true Australian could support life for more than two hours at a stretch. After Helidon, the train begins to ascend the celebrated ranges in broad curves, affording a succession of wide views of seemingly boundless wooded slopes that disappear in the vague blue haze of the horizon. It is not exactly grand scenery, for it lacks the rugged majesty and the foaming torrents of the Alps; but there is yet inherent in it a certain element of the sublime, as one gazes at these far-



On the Ranges, Toowoomba



stretching gum-forests that cover the land without a break for mile upon mile.

Toowoomba itself is the health resort of South Queensland, the chosen retreat of jaded and overheated Brisbanites, who crowd here during the summer months in order to obtain fresh mountain air and comparatively cool nights. It is a large wide-spreading town, and is constantly increasing in size ; a fact that is scarcely to be wondered at, seeing that Toowoomba stands some two thousand feet above sea-level and has on the whole a temperate and remarkably healthy climate. I may add that on occasions I found the climate of Toowoomba rather too temperate to suit my own convenience, and even in the hot month of October there was often pouring rain for days on end ; whilst at night the whole place was wrapped in dense fog. I had often during my year of residence in Australia to visit Toowoomba, where I used to spend my periods of waiting at the comfortable little Club Hotel. I grew to like the little city extremely, combining, as it does, the convenience and cheerfulness of a lively country town, with fine scenery within easy reach, and permitting of some interesting walks along the edge of the Ranges and into the neighbouring Bush. The climate, too, I found on the whole delightful, at least in winter, for though the mornings were often sharp and frosty, and fires and hot-water bottles were welcome at night, yet by ten o'clock in the morning we were enjoying clear brilliant sunshine, and could spend the greater part of the day sitting out of doors. Almost every morning and evening I used to make my way as far as the brim of the steep ridge that marks the course of the Ranges, and never in my rambles did I fail to admire the glorious panorama of hill and forest to eastward, which was always changing but always impressive in the varied lights of morning, noon and sunset. It was this same scenery that won the

affection of one of the most distinguished of modern Australian poets, the late George Essex Evans, who died so recently as 1909, after having spent the greater part of his life in Australia, and much of that period at his chosen home amidst the wild grandeur of the Ranges of Toowoomba. The city is grateful for the presence of its poet and proud of his reputation ; it has accordingly perpetuated Essex's memory by a monument of amazing ugliness placed on the brow of the Range, where the Welshman (for Essex was a native of Pembrokeshire) was wont to meditate and compose. On one side of this pious but tasteless obelisk are engraved some admirably descriptive lines contained in the poet's " Ode to Toowoomba " :

" Dark purple chased with sudden gloom and glory,
 Like waves in wild unrest,
 Low-wooded billows and steep summits hoary,
 Ridge, slope, and mountain crest,
 Cease at her feet with faces turned to meet her
 Enthroned, apart, serene,
 Above her vassal hills whose voices greet her
 The Mountain Queen."

Besides serving as a health resort and hilly playground (so that it has sometimes been playfully nicknamed the Simla of Queensland), Toowoomba also stands as the unofficial capital of the rich district of the Darling Downs, and is a sort of agricultural Mecca for the many farmers and settlers on those fertile rolling plains, that yield nowadays such abundance of sheep, wheat, barley, vines, vegetables, maize and timber. The broad cheerful streets of the town echo all day long with the hoofs of trotting horses and with the conversations of numberless countrymen, long, lean, sun-browned and sinewy, who have ridden or driven into town to transact business or to seek amusement. For there are plenty of good shops, a skating rink, a

town hall, lending libraries, a local "Empire" with living pictures, and all the usual adjuncts suitable to the most advanced forms of civilisation in the twentieth century. Toowoomba is also essentially a residential place with its club, its golf-ground, its fine race-course, and, above all, with its many pretty homes belonging to private persons that line the wide dusty red roads for miles around. Thanks, too, to the comparatively cool climate and the frequent rains and thick mountain mists, the gardens here are gay with all the familiar English flowers; whilst the hawthorn hedges and rows of weeping willows lend an aspect of European verdure to the country-side. I have been told that the graceful bright green weeping willow, of which tree one sees such numbers beside every Australian stream, have all originally sprung from slips or cuttings from the island of St Helena, where in former days the Australia-bound vessels used to touch for water, and where the outgoing colonists generally supplied themselves with specimens of the local willow that flourishes in Napoleon's isle of exile. All roses grow luxuriantly at Toowoomba, covering walls and fences with masses of bloom, notably the white Banksia and the pale lemon-scented Lamarque rose; also the citizens declare that their gardens produce the finest and sweetest violets to be found anywhere in the world.

Wild flowers were rather scarce around Toowoomba, though in the few uncleared patches of scrub on top of the ranges I used to find the elegant white clematis and other blossoming vines. A species of dwarf wattle, bright golden in colour, grew freely on the rocky slopes near Harlaxton, a few miles from the town; and in the same locality I noticed peach-trees in bloom and also lemon-trees growing in the Bush apparently quite wild. At Gabbinbar, about five miles away, I was fortunate enough to come upon a large area, some acres in extent, covered wholly

with trees of the true golden wattle, then in the full splendour of their bloom. It was a sight never to be forgotten—that ethereal mass of bright yellow swaying in the soft perfumed sunny air and outlined against a sky of the deepest blue ; it constitutes an Australian memory I shall ever treasure. But you may only admire and not touch all this golden glory of efflorescence, for if you pick a spray or a bough the delicate silky threads of the blooms rapidly contract, so that within a very short time the flowers become mere tiny dull yellow balls ; not that the wattle actually fades, but that its sheen and fluffiness rapidly depart, and turn into a commonplace thing compared with its original ungathered beauty.

To prove how extraordinarily adaptable the Australian soil must be for most imported plants, it was near Toowoomba that I observed one day, growing practically wild, a large thicket of the superb *Weigandia*, which I remember first noticing as a coddled and treasured rarity in the rich villa gardens of Nice and Mentone. Its heads of bright purple flowers and huge heart-shaped leaves covered quite a good space beside the grassy track ; whilst in the arable field beyond the wooden fencing was a crop of young barley, in which was trailing freely, as a noxious weed, the beautiful large blue periwinkle of our English springtime. It struck me as curious to see this gorgeous tropical plant and the humble British flower thus flourishing freely side by side in an alien soil.

My many rambles along the brow of the Ranges near Toowoomba brought me into touch with the native bird life of Australia. The olive-green butcher-birds and grey shrike-larks were common amongst the many camphor laurels in the streets and parks ; and the pee-wee, a sort of miniature magpie, seemed to perch and utter its shrill cry from every roof and railing for miles around. Occasionally I espied flights of green parakeets

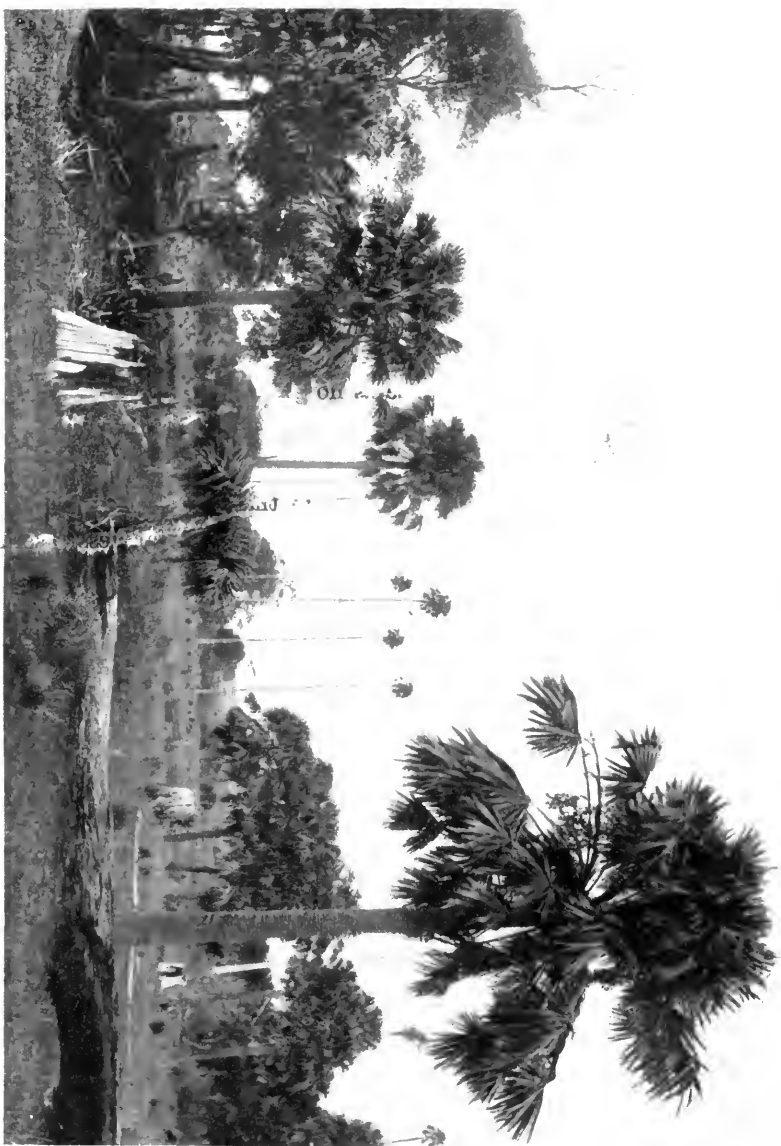
amongst the gum-tree tops ; but what especially interested me was the number of laughing-jackasses (*Dacelo gigas*), whose native name is kukaburra. This curious bird was remarkably common near the Ranges, and I once counted no less than half-a-dozen perched together on one small tree. The kukaburra, which is fully as typical of the Australian fauna as are the emu and the kangaroo, is in reality a kingfisher, though he does not especially haunt streams or pools. His plumage, which at a little distance resembles fur rather than feathers, is composed of soft harmonious greys and whites, with the exception of the back and tail plumage, which appears of a rich umber brown. There are funny hair-like quills on the broad flat head, and the bird's mouth and bill are of generous proportions. The laughing-jackass is a favourite everywhere, and even apart from the legal protection afforded him by Government edicts, popular feeling would probably allow him some degree of safety. In captivity he makes a most amusing and intelligent pet, as one can readily understand from his knowing face and bright brown eye. He is also useful as a vermin-destroyer, and I believe it is a most interesting and instructive experience to watch one of these birds tackle and kill a large poisonous snake, and ultimately devour it. His uncanny cackling laughter, gradually rising from a low satirical chuckle to a prolonged and raucous "Hoo! hoo! hoo!" of diabolical mirth, is often alleged to occur at regular periods throughout the day, for which cause the bird has been nicknamed "the settler's clock"; but, for myself, I never could perceive any regularity or method in these vocal performances, which used to ring through the oppressive silence of the Bush with startling vigour at the most unexpected moments.

I made the return journey to Sydney overland, leaving

Toowoomba in torrents of rain on one of the last days of October, and reaching Sydney about eleven o'clock the following morning. Owing to the circumstance that the railways in the State of Queensland have a narrower gauge than those of New South Wales, it was necessary for me to change trains at the frontier station of Wallan-garra. It seems strange that after some thirteen years of Federal administration such an anomaly should still exist; and though the pronounced intention of an uniform gauge for all the States is always very much "in the air," yet there seems no immediate prospect of this highly desirable, not to say necessary, reform being carried out just at present. It is, in fact, just one of those obvious national schemes of improvement that have been allowed to lapse in favour of more exciting but less practical projects.

From Toowoomba to the busy little town of Warwick the railway traverses the fertile and flourishing district of the Darling Downs, with sheep farms and many fields of barley and lucerne; but soon after leaving Warwick the aspect of the country changes, and the train passes for some hours through a wild hilly region covered with dense Bush, and in places watered by mountain streams whose beds are of massy grey boulders. The landscape was certainly somewhat monotonous, but, being the springtide of the Australian year, the endless ranks of grey-blue gum-trees were variegated with clusters of the fresh young shoots, whose ruddy leaves showed like innumerable tongues of flame amid the sombre foliage. Here and there I saw specimens of the Rosella parrot, whose scarlet breast and yellow pinions added a much-needed note of colour to the forest scenery.

At Wallan-garra I obtained a comfortable berth on the



Cabbage Tree Palms

waiting Sydney express for the remainder of the journey, and at eight o'clock next morning I was breakfasting in the station of grimy Newcastle, which, like its historic namesake on the Tyne, ranks as the chief colliery centre of Australia. I obtained a peep at its busy harbour filled with collier shipping ; whilst from Newcastle southward the country is interesting, with its blossoming scrub-lands and its many groups of the stately cabbage-tree palm, which is indigenous to New South Wales. This palm has large fan-like leaves and bunches of small fruit, and it owes its homely name to the circumstance that the young shoots of the fronds, boiled in the manner of the common or garden cabbage of advanced English cookery, once afforded a wholesome article of diet to the early settlers on the Hunter River, which drains part of this district and often inundates it. Soon after quitting Gosford, the train crosses by a long iron bridge the broad estuary of the Hawkesbury River, with its many wooded headlands and broken bays and inlets. The deep land-locked reaches of the Hawkesbury have often been compared with the scenery of the Rhine, though personally I could not perceive a tittle of resemblance between the two rivers. It is not likely that the banks and creeks of the Hawkesbury will long be left in their present condition of comparatively undisturbed nature, for this locality is every year growing in popularity with the people of Sydney, who turn hither to find the repose and unspoiled natural surroundings that are rapidly becoming scarce in the neighbourhood of their prosperous city and its harbour. At Gosford and at Woy-Woy are being built many bungalows for well-to-do citizens, that come to spend their week-ends on these placid waters, whose overhanging slopes still retain so much of their pristine charm and aspect.

After ascending the rising ground south of the Hawkesbury

River, one quickly penetrates the spreading suburbs of the north shore of Sydney Harbour ; and after crossing the Parramatta arm of the harbour near Ryde, and threading the western suburbs, the train finally steams into Redfern station, which is the main depot of Sydney.

XI

ON THE DARLING DOWNS

FROM Toowoomba in South Queensland I started to pay a long-promised visit to a certain sheep station on the edge of the Darling Downs, some seventy miles south-west of Toowoomba itself. The journey to Milmerran, which was my host's nearest railway station, can be made thrice a week by a line of railway that has only been completed from Pittsworth so lately as the autumn of 1911, to the great jubilation, naturally, of the Milmerranites, whose personal convenience and material prospects have been greatly enhanced thereby. The line traverses the long swelling undulations of the Darling Downs, which from the train window present constant examples of human energy and enterprise, but offer little of the picturesque. For the landscape is somewhat melancholy and commonplace, being at times suggestive of the vast stretches of tith one traverses on the main line from Calais to Paris. A few scattered wooded tumps occasionally relieve the general dullness of the scene, and in some places the Bush still remains uncleared or else only in process of destruction by means of ring-barking. "Ring-barking" consists in cutting deep into the bark of the tree in a circle, so that the natural fall or rise of the sap is prevented thereby, with the result that ere many months are past the tree so treated withers and dies, after which the dried-up skeleton is either left or else is cut down, and the stump dug out or burned with fire. In the hot still air the horizon was shimmering with heat haze, and near the

big homestead of Yandilla the distant levels were trembling with mirage, giving a vague impression of shallow shining waters with groves of tall trees beside them ; yet it seemed hard to believe that anyone, save a genuine idiot, could be led to believe in the existence of an actual lake.

At one point the line runs for some miles through a district that has been utterly conquered by the modern curse of Queensland, the prickly pear, or pest pear (*Opuntia inermis*), which in this month of October was just beginning to put forth its sulphur-tinted blossoms. It is stated on good authority that this terrible pest-plant now covers some fifteen million acres of Crown land in this State, and that its total eradication would involve an expenditure of about twenty million pounds sterling by the State treasury. The story of the introduction of this fatal weed into Australia is not without interest, for it is said to have been first brought to the island-continent by no less a personage than John M'Arthur, who had previously imported the first draft of merino sheep from Spain, one of the chief sources of future Australian wealth. No doubt M'Arthur, having observed the various uses to which the prickly pear is put on the shores of the Mediterranean, where population teems and labour is cheap and plentiful, arrived at the unlucky conclusion that this plant—commonly called shortly “pear” out here—would serve as an excellent fence for the new settlers' gardens and paddocks. A more disastrous gift to a young and thinly peopled colony it would have been difficult to suggest ; and the alleged circumstance that the original specimen of *Opuntia inermis* was despatched to these Downs in a sealed box and carefully packed in cotton wool adds a touch of irony to the story. For the progeny of this treasured gift is spreading in the most alarming manner in this quarter-settled State, wherein the population is still so scanty (being less than one

person to the square mile), and at the same time labour is so scarce and costly, that both the Government wiseacres and the private landowners have so far shown themselves wholly incapable of coping with its inroads. Every sort of theory and suggestion as to the possible uses of the pest-pear has been advanced : that it should be ground up or boiled down as feed for stock ; that the pulp should be utilised for paper-making ; that the plant itself should be made to support an industry in cochineal, etc. But the plain fact emerges that this coarse green spiny cactus possesses no nutritious or practical properties of any value, even if there were abundance of cheap labour at hand for the carrying-out of the elaborate processes suggested. Its vitality, too, is so remarkable that mere uprooting or cutting is wholly insufficient, since every separate leaf has to be burned ; and the sole method of destruction that has so far proved serviceable is the injection of some poisonous fluid, of arsenic and soda in solution, which is squirted into each leaf of the plant by means of a "pear-gun." This instrument, which costs from four to five pounds, is simply a large metal syringe filled with the prepared liquid and armed with a sharp steel dagger, wherewith the owner of the pear-gun stabs each leaf of the cactus before squirting the solution into the wound so inflicted. The leaves thus treated quickly shrink and turn yellow ; yet even then it is considered advisable to burn the shrivelled plant. This method is certainly efficacious in the case of small growing plants, but it would be useless to fight the pest on so small a scale ; and the Government is still engaged upon one experiment after another, in the hope of eventually lighting upon some sure means of destroying the pear wholesale.

Beyond Pittsworth, which is a flat, hot, dusty township of some size and importance, begins a district of rich black soil

that, prior to the extension of the railway, rendered the roads to the west of this place impassable after heavy rains to coach or buggy, the wheels becoming hopelessly clogged in the dark treacley mud. A couple of hours' travelling farther and Milmerran is reached, the terminus of the line, where I duly found my host awaiting my arrival. After a meal at the local public-house, quaintly named the Grand Hotel, *à la mode australienne*, we entered a roomy buggy, and soon were jogging along the Bush roads towards the sheep station of C——.

Roads in the still uncleared or partially cleared districts of the Darling Downs consist of broad grassy enclosed tracks, thickly studded with timber. The driver follows no particular course within the ample fenced-in space, but dodges or surmounts the various obstacles as he feels disposed; and thus we bumped and straggled along very agreeably over powdery red earth, stretches of withered grass and sandy patches of soil. Beyond the enclosing palings of the roadway lay ring-barked trees in endless, dismal monotony, so that the sudden vision of a small but prosperous-looking homestead, with a garden full of fruitful orange-trees and a solitary date-palm, offered a welcome change from the dreary scenery of dead or dying gum-trees. For the prevailing tints of gum, she-oak, cypress-pine and brigalow are all more or less sombre; so that, in spite of the brilliant sunshine and the soft turquoise-blue of the cloudless sky, I could never escape from a haunting sense of melancholy in the Bush. And, strangely enough, it was in the hard clear light of noontide, when all the birds and beasts were silent, that this curious but depressing influence especially made itself felt.

The sheep station of C——, whither I was bound, consisted of the original homestead with some few thousand adjoining acres, both cleared and uncleared of timber, that was the sole

portion left intact of one of the giant "runs" of an earlier period, when the "squatter" was all-powerful in the State. Some years previously the huge station of C—— had been cut up by order of the Government, with the result that a number of smaller holdings, or "selections," had been carved out of its immense area and handed over for occupation on varying terms of tenure to a number of farmers, or "cockies," as these minor agriculturists have been contemptuously dubbed by the dispossessed squatter class, whose coveted lands they have now managed to secure. It is not for me to discourse in these pages of the alleged grievances of either squatter or cocky; or to speak of the tacit enmity that so often exists between the aristocratic household of the "station" and their humbler neighbours, whose new homesteads have of recent years sprung up within the squatter's ancient domains, that he had grown to regard almost as his own property and not that of the State, which had suffered him to occupy them so long without disturbance. In the case of C——, the old home of the original squatter remained, though in a somewhat deteriorated condition. Its shingle roofs were none too sound, and had here and there been clumsily patched with small sheets of corrugated iron; the large gardens were now a mere wilderness of rank weeds and grass set with a few languishing fruit-trees; the solid mid-Victorian furniture of the reception-rooms was shabby; and the handsome book-shelves of Queensland red cedar had long been stripped of all their volumes of any value or interest, and now only contained a heterogeneous collection of antiquated works on law, farriery and other dry-as-dust subjects. The house itself, admirably planned and well adapted to the prevailing conditions of a hot climate, stood in the exact centre of a large ring, some seven hundred acres in extent, of cleared and fenced land. This wide circular space of open grass-

land was enclosed by the thick upstanding Bush, whose tall smooth white tree-trunks showed like regular rows of marble pillars against their dark sylvan background. In one part of this open space, in form almost a perfect circle, could be espied the former graveyard of the old station, a pathetic spot containing a few tombstones to the memory of long-forgotten stock-men and black-fellows who had been buried here many years ago.

Round three sides of the house were ample wooden verandahs that always afforded shade, and where on the hottest days there was to be found ice-cold water in the large canvas bag that hangs from the roof in nearly all Australian homes. Below the untidy garden was the creek—a creek being a succession of pools in a gully that in time of flood is turned into a swollen torrent, so that a heavy rainfall is sometimes described as “running the creeks,” if it is able to produce so desirable a result. Beside the creek were some weeping willows and a few native apple-trees, the latter being a variety of the gum having bright green leaves. Here also were a couple of deep pools or water-holes, whereon one occasionally saw wild duck, a few cranes or ibis, or even at times a pair of stray pelicans.

According to an old Australian ditty, it is the bounden duty of every British visitor to make at least one expedition into the Bush, “to see the gay marsupial and the stately eucalypt.” Of the former I intend to speak presently, but as to “the stately eucalypt” the stranger can feast his eyes to repletion on endless varieties of that arboreal product of Nature, for the whole of the coastal region of Eastern Australia, outside its few large cities, remains to-day practically one vast gum-forest, or zone of Bush, which is still only in process of being cleared for human settlement. What with blue gums, red gums,

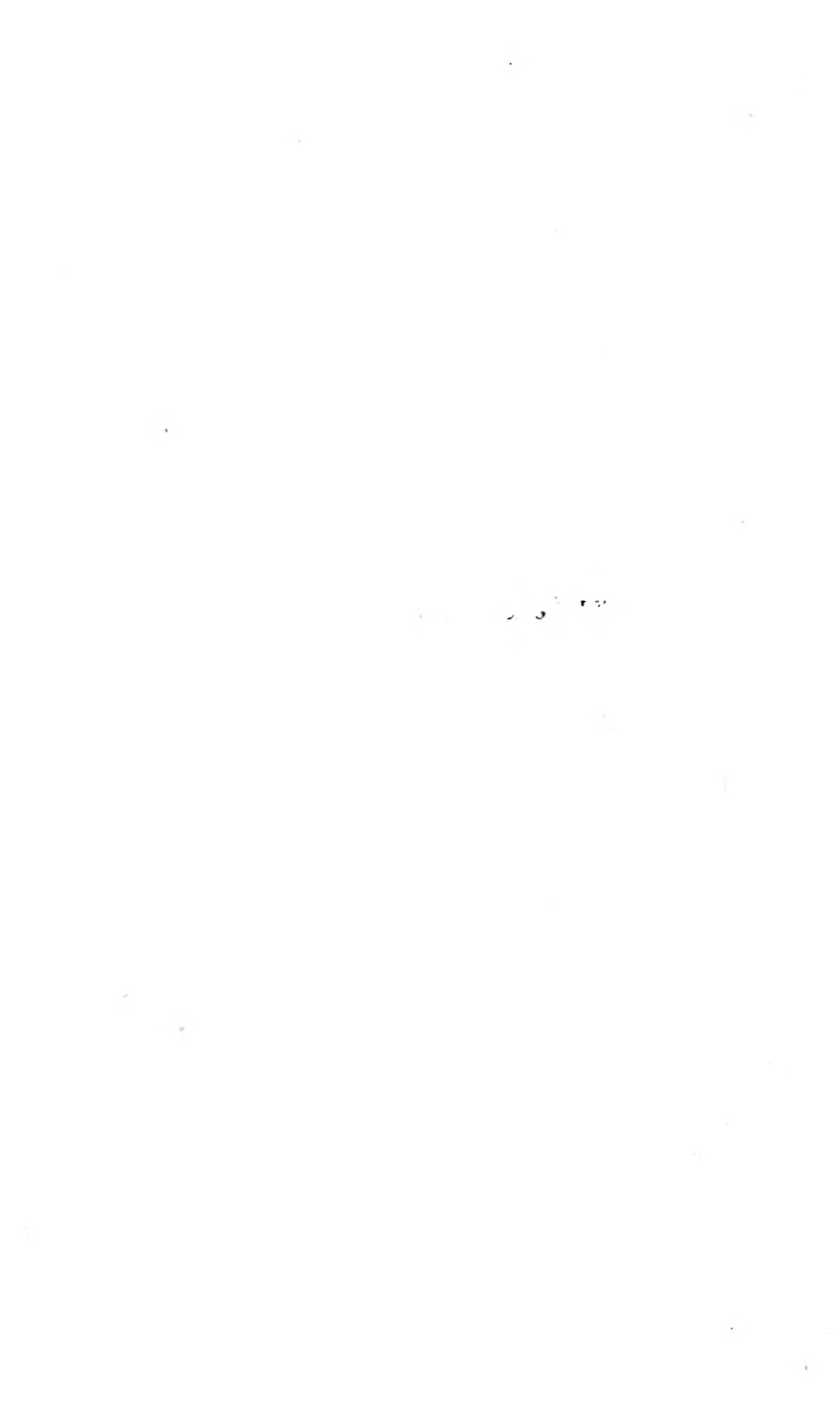
peppermint gums, spotted gums, scented gums, native apples, stringy bark, iron bark and dozens of other gums whose names I have either forgotten or never heard, the interested visitor can study the many possibilities and peculiarities of the genus eucalypt at his leisure. But, besides the universal gums, there are other trees that are also common : the round-leaved box-tree, for example, which is not a box-tree at all, and often hybridises with the gum, the result of this union being known by the eccentric name of the " gum-top-box " ; the iron-wood ; the sandalwood ; the weeping wilga, whose crushed leaves emit the odour of sweet lavender ; the highly valued kurrajong, with the pale green foliage that the cattle love ; and dozens upon dozens of others. One of the commonest of trees is the brigalow, seldom of great height, with feathery tufts of long grey leaves, sickle-shaped and pointing vertically towards the earth, as if to avoid the direct rays of the fierce sun. The brigalow always struck me as the most elegant and picturesque of all the various Bush trees, and it often grows in thick circular clumps, which appear as though they were the outcome of most careful artificial planting. Beside the rivers or creeks is found the casaurina, or she-oak (said to be a corrupted form of the native word *sheok*), which has no affinity with the ordinary oak. This tree is in reality a species of pine with long untidy stringy foliage, from which the lightest breeze will draw the most melancholy sounds of wailing, as though the atmosphere of the Bush were not already sufficiently depressing. Then there is the cypress-pine, a far more attractive tree, which supplies good timber for the weather-board houses of the farmers. Near water, too, are commonly found the many tea-trees, of which the red bottle-brush with its resplendent blossoms is the most ornamental. Of the many smaller trees and shrubs, the wattle, in its endless variety, is the most conspicuous,

and also the most welcome, by reason of its yellow flowers and their delicious odour.

Indeed the gay wattle is sometimes the sole ornament of the real Bush, wherein one may wander mile upon mile, for hours at a stretch, with almost nothing to look upon save long brown grass underfoot and dull grey tree-tops overhead. A first experience of the Bush is doubtless interesting, but the sense of interest soon flickers out before the feeling of hopeless, endless monotony that after all constitutes its dominant note. It is an easy matter to walk or ride in the Bush, for the tall gum-trees usually stand far apart, looking as though they had been planted systematically by some skilled forester in the past; but there is no undergrowth, and one sees no wild animals and hears very few bird notes, save the calls of the Bush magpie or the Bush raven. It seems strange there should be such a lack of flowers amid these vast tree-studded grassy expanses, where the sunshine penetrates everywhere. There are, of course, a few exceptions, though I cannot help thinking that the flora of the Darling Downs must be phenomenally meagre. There were the bright mauve blossoms of the Darling Pea, a handsome vetch said to prove poisonous to sheep on the rare occasions of their attempting to eat it. There was the pretty "native bluebell," a small star-like blue campanula not unlike the English harebell, whose presence is said to indicate a profitable soil. Often I perceived clumps of the uninteresting orchid (*Dendrobium teretefolium*) commonly called "Bush Arrowroot," with its thick dark leaves and spikes of dull pinkish flowers, growing in the forks of withered trees; whilst the Bush mistletoe, or loranthus, a hanging parasite with small scarlet and yellow blossoms, waved in profusion from many of the gum boughs. Perhaps the most attractive plant was the Bush jessamine, a lovely clambering vine bearing



Kangaroo



masses of sweet-scented pure white flowers, around which were always hovering multitudes of winged insects, including numbers of the handsomely marked native white butterfly, (*Pieris tentonia*), "the sole Australian representative of this well-known species." Along the banks of the creeks were flourishing a few coarse and strongly aromatic weeds, mostly owing such expressive names as "Stinking Roger" and "Cobblers' Pegs," together with a few varieties of daisy, the wild trailing purple pea (*Hardenbergia monophylla*) and some thickets of the hated lantana. The above-named plants will be found to exhaust pretty nearly the list of the common flora of this inland district.

With regard to "the gay marsupial," which signifies the wonderful pouched fauna of Australia, I feel justified in saying that the visitor will have to travel pretty far afield before he is likely to obtain a sight of these interesting animals in their natural state. Everyone, of course, expects to see kangaroos and opossums, but it is no easy matter to obtain a glimpse of either, even in remote districts where they are known to abound. Practically all wild animals are nocturnal in their habits, and in the case of those in Australia, the war of extermination has been waged so fiercely on them that not only have their numbers been considerably thinned, but the constant persecution has also made them very shy and timid. For this reason it was, I expect, that I never once perceived a kangaroo or wallaby from the train window, even when travelling through the wild ranges of New England; no fur was ever to be seen, save for an occasional rabbit scuttling to his burrow. To see wild animals, therefore, the tourist must either content himself with the zoos in the large cities, or with the big natural reserves, such as National Park near Sydney, unless he has the opportunity of paying a visit to some inland cattle or sheep station,

where he will have some chance of satisfying his curiosity in this respect.

There were a few kangaroos at C——, generally to be found in the scrub-land of the largest of the paddocks, a well-timbered, fenced enclosure of some fifteen hundred acres. These would doubtless have been exterminated long before, had it not been for the efforts of my host—*O sic omnes!*—to preserve a few of these interesting animals, of which not many are now left in this progressive district. When crouching at rest in the long grass, kangaroos at a little distance have much the appearance of fallow deer, but the likeness is at once dispelled when one watches the curious creatures striding, or rather loping, off on their long hind legs, at a pace which seems leisurely but is in reality fast enough. Though of a great size, the kangaroo is absolutely harmless and very shy, except when brought to bay by man or dog; he has the stature of a British grenadier and the head of a frightened rabbit, and he is naturally scarcely more pugnacious in his wild state towards man than is the last-named rodent. Nevertheless he is mercilessly harried and hunted for the sake of his hide, which makes good soft leather, and for his long gristly thick tail, which furnishes delicious soup. Of other native animals I saw very few. Once I came across a carcass of the quaint little *koala*, or native bear, one of the funniest and most innocent of quadrupeds, that lives chiefly amongst the branches of the gum-trees and feeds on their young shoots. This marsupial has also been pursued and slaughtered almost to the verge of extinction; and indeed, as an eminent European naturalist correctly concluded the other day, it will not be long before all the ancient wild animals of Eastern Australia will cease to exist as such, except in the few sanctuaries or reserves, unless the laws that have been framed for their protection are sternly enforced against the perfect

army of loafers who seek for their skins, or against the selfish farmers who destroy these creatures wholesale, on the plea that they devour a fraction of the grass that is intended solely for their stock. Although I often heard them climbing or scratching after dusk on the roof, I never once saw an opossum during the whole of my stay in the Bush, where during the night-watches one is often disturbed by weird sounds, which usually indicate the presence of some uninvited denizen of the forest that has been sleeping all the long hours of sunshine in a thick tree or hollow trunk.

“ Hark, what was that ? a bat or a cat ?

Bandicoot, 'possum, or kangaroo-rat

That startled the ear of the sleeper ? ”

In all probability the mysterious sound in question came from a 'possum near a window, or from a kangaroo-rat hopping over the verandah boards, the last-named animal being a miniature kangaroo about the size of an English hare. The kangaroo-rat was still common in this, comparatively speaking, settled district of South Queensland, where the native fauna has been greatly reduced, for the kangaroo is now rare and the emu extinct in these parts. The dingo, too, is fast disappearing, though he now and again takes toll of the grazier's sheep ; but this native marauder is now retreating before the advent of his English imported cousin, the fox, which, having wrought fearful havoc in Victoria and New South Wales, both amongst the settlers' flocks and the native ground game, has gradually worked his wicked way up northward so far as Queensland. The dingo, or wild dog of Australia, is a tall fine member of the canine race, with a yellow coat, bright yellow eyes and tall prick ears, an attractive but not an easily tameable animal. For

long it was always considered that the dingo was the descendant of domestic dogs imported into Australia by Malay invaders from the north ; but scientific discoveries of recent years have gone to prove that perhaps the much-detested dingo is the most ancient inhabitant of the continent, where he has existed prior even to the coming of the black aboriginal races, for this animal's fossilised bones have been unearthed in caves and in strata of the soil of immense geological antiquity. Curiously enough, the English hare is becoming common on the Darling Downs, where it attains a greater weight and size than is usual at home.

Of snakes, which are only too plentiful everywhere in Australia and Tasmania, I was fortunate in seeing very few, though I often walked in the most snaky-looking places, and even in spots that bore an evil reputation with regard to these reptiles. Iguanas, or "'goannas," I saw in abundance during the hot months at C——, which constitute the breeding season of these ugly and repellent lizards, which vary in length from two to six feet. The iguana, or lace monitor (*Varannus varius*), is, at least to a "new chum," most alarming in his attitude and aspect, for he is, as the bushman expresses it, "the most danged jumped-up thing in all creation." If he is disturbed, the iguana promptly dashes for the nearest tree-trunk, which he climbs with a sound like the rattling of chain armour, and conceals himself in the topmost boughs, amongst which he possesses the knack of imitating a dead branch. If, however, this great lizard be surprised in the open and cannot escape up a tree in the usual manner, he stands at bay, opens wide his hideous jaws, puffs out his throat, and hisses defiance to dog and man ; for it is not considered safe to ride too close, lest the loathsome black and yellow reptile may suddenly run up the horse's forelegs, to the unspeakable discomfiture of rider

and steed, who would both object to the near presence of some three or four feet of snaky monstrosity. These sinister but interesting lizards were very lively when I first visited C——, in the month of October, but on the occasion of a second visit, during the winter months, not a single specimen was to be seen, for the iguana spends the cold wet season in drowsing in some hollow log or rocky cleft. In spite of his disgusting and fearsome mien, the 'goanna is in reality quite inoffensive, though if "bailed-up" (*Anglice*, cornered) he can inflict a very sharp and even poisonous bite, and can easily hamstring a dog's leg. He is also harmless to stock, though he is an incorrigible egg-stealer from the farmyard, and also from the nests in the Bush, where, however, he sometimes meets with well-merited punishment from the beaks of the enraged cockatoos, when he scales their breeding trees. The ugly brute bears on the whole rather a good reputation with the colonists, for not only does he devour carrion and thereby acts often as a useful scavenger, but he also eats young rabbits and hares in great numbers.

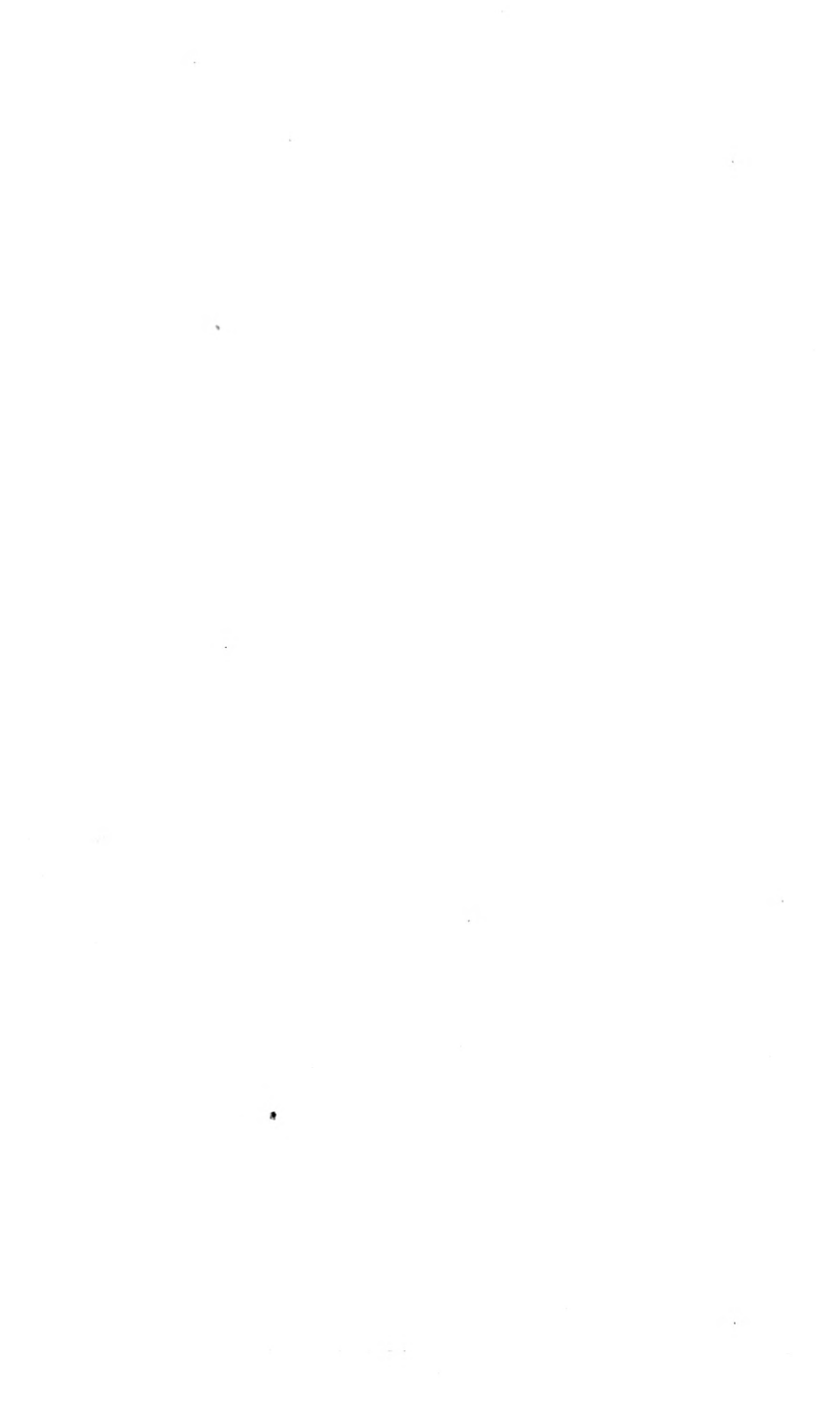
In bird life, too, this corner of the Darling Downs was not very rich. An occasional white cockatoo would be seen flying overhead, uttering screeches, such as only a cockatoo to the manner born can emit in ear-splitting force. A few black and white ibis, small flocks of black or brown wild duck, and some stray shags haunted the lagoons near the house; and now and again a "Plains turkey," or great grey bustard, with its immense stretch of wing, would be seen, pursued, shot, cooked and eaten with relish by the household, for this fine bird, which often weighs fifteen pounds, affords delicious faring. Round the homestead itself squawked and cackled that noisy party of dun-coloured jays, called equally the "Happy Family" and the "Twelve Apostles," which are vulgarly supposed never to need water, and therefore to survive the worst droughts. Very

tame, too, were the yellow-billed soldier-birds, neat and dapper in their trim quaker-like grey plumage, and for ever uttering their startled cry of "Quick-quick-quick-quick!" From time to time parakeets came to feed upon the blossoms of the gum-trees, and one day I noticed a small flock of the elegant little cockatoo-parrot, or cockatiel, with grey plumage and tall yellow crest, and with a deep orange flush on each cheek. These birds, under the local name of quarrior, are very popular as pets, and deservedly so, for they are very affectionate and have the most engaging ways, though they cannot boast the rich plumage of another favourite domestic bird, the galah, the pink and grey cockatoo. The galah is very easily tamed, and it is quite a common sight to see children walking along unconcernedly with galahs perched on their shoulders, for these charming birds neither bite nor scream, like their larger cousins, the sulphur-crested cockatoos.

During one of our many rides in the Bush that surrounded the well-fenced paddocks of C—— station, I sometimes used to note through the serried ranks of gum-trees the distant outline of a long densely wooded ridge a little to northward. This height, I learned, was popularly known as the Captain's Mountain, in memory of a certain Captain Vignolles of the old Western Creek station, one of the earliest pastoralists to penetrate into and develop this region. I suggested a ride thither to my host, and accordingly a few days later, on a cold misty morning, we set off in quest of the aforesaid hill, cantering for some miles through a rough pear-infested country, whose sole beauty was to be found in the many wattle-trees, some covered with golden, and some with pale yellow, blossom, the latter being the so-called "cat's-tail" variety. We had about seven miles to ride before we reached the base of the Captain's Mountain, which I reckoned to stand about seven hundred feet



Burning off Grass



above the surrounding woody plains. It was a steep and intricate ascent, also a very rough one, owing to the quantities of volcanic rubble and pumice-stone whereof the surface of the ground was composed. Our horses, which were of course unshod, exhibited some reluctance to scrambling up the almost precipitous flank of this isolated ridge. They managed, however, to clamber up, and certainly the view from the summit well repaid the exertion and trouble of the attempt, for the panorama was far grander and wider than I had been led to suppose. Having once gained the crest, we perceived the whole of the encircling country, as far as the eye could reach, in every direction spread out below us like a map, a seemingly limitless ocean of gum-forest, from the midst of which our rocky height arose as a solitary peak. To southward could be traced in the grey-green mass of Bush the various farms with their ring-barked paddocks, which stood out as mere specks or lines of a dead white in the vast spreading forest, for indeed it was apparently all virgin Bush to the horizon. It was an inspiring and a very wonderful spectacle, this survey of a still almost untamed bosky wilderness ; and it occurred to myself as somewhat curious that in all probability I was the first person to ascend Captain's Mountain, like Doctor Syntax of yore, solely with the object of the picturesque !

The descent was more difficult than the going up, and we took a long time to pick our way over the steep stony slopes, thickly covered in places with the strange feathery grass-trees. Now and again we disturbed a stray wallaby, that made off with queer leaps into the shelter of the Bush. It was long past noon when at length we reached the base of the hill, and so late was it that we decided to beg the hospitality of a neighbouring farmer for our dinner. So we rode up to a raw but comfortable-looking homestead, where we received a cordial welcome. The

house, built as usual on piles and constructed wholly of cypress-pine, with its roof and tank of grey corrugated iron, was surrounded by a trim and well-stocked garden, containing many flowers and also a couple of lemon-trees loaded with a fine crop of the pale fruit. The young farmer's wife had just prepared the midday meal, so we all sate down to substantial and appetising fare, consisting of cold meat, boiled pumpkin, jam pie and bread and butter, with tea to drink. Except for a casual allusion to the lately held Federal elections, the conversation was purely local in character, for the dwellers in the Bush always fight shy of strangers, and indeed have little time and probably less inclination to cultivate the art of small talk suitable to so rare an event as the chance arrival of a British visitor in their midst. Personally, however, I found I could always sustain a mild conversation with the "cocky" by judicious inquiries after the size and nature of his farm, the number of his sheep or cattle, the distance of his market, etc., and it was easy, and even natural, for me to discuss her garden with the cocky's wife.

On the bare earth outside the homestead I observed a number of recently obtained wallaby skins, all pegged out to dry in the sunshine. Skins of the wallaby, which is practically a smaller edition of the kangaroo, nowadays fetch a few shillings apiece; and, such being the case, many of the casual labourers on the farms have ceased to ply their usual work and have taken to "the wallaby track" as a more lucrative, or at least as a more exciting means of a livelihood. The wretched animals are therefore not only killed on the occupied lands, where they commit the awful crime of eating some of the farmer's grass, but they are also systematically hunted and slaughtered by tens, if not by hundreds of thousands among the distant rocky ranges and gulleys. So enormous, in fact, has been their

destruction in recent years that at last the Government has issued a proclamation against this wholesale massacre of so-called vermin. But it is of course one thing to enact a merciful law and quite another to enforce its provisions ; and I don't suppose the official edict will have any substantial effect on the operations of the wallaby-hunters, who scour the land in all directions the whole year round in search of their prey, though of course skins obtained outside of the legally appointed season must be disposed of with caution and *sub rosa*. And, also, the scarcer grows the wallaby, so much the dearer will become the price of his coveted pelt. At almost every cocky's house that I happened to visit I used to note the pitiful row of decayed little heads of deceased wallabies that were usually nailed (presumably in imitation of the British gamekeeper's advertisement of his prowess at home) upon the boards of some outbuilding. "Just think," remarked a cocky to me on one occasion, pointing with pride to his lethal collection of skulls, "what a lot of my grass those fellows would have eaten !" So what with the farmer grudging the poor wallaby a little grass in his own native land, and the hunter thirsting for the pieces of silver that are the price of his fur and skin, the ultimate fate of this interesting and innocent animal is sealed before many years have passed.

One final remark by way of caution before closing this chapter. People do not realise how absurdly easy it is to get lost, even at no great distance from the familiar homestead, in the Bush, in that strange featureless deceptive world of trees and grass. Even for the chance visitor it might be useful to make an effort to acquire some rudimentary knowledge of common Bush-lore, in case of such a misfortune. The first thing to be done on finding that one is "getting bushed" is

to stop and reflect, and not to go blundering on in the hope of hitting a recognisable trail. Perhaps the best plan of all, as it is also the first human instinct of self-preservation, is to announce the interesting fact of one's distress by giving vent to a prolonged "Coo-ee!" the national call for attention in Australia, which is said to be an aboriginal mode of requesting assistance. Should your frantic cooees remain unanswered, then you must take careful stock of your very awkward position and consult your compass. If you have no compass, then you must make a compass of your watch-dial and the sun overhead (any Bushman will tell you how this is done). At night it is easier to discover the cardinal points of the compass, for then you have in the southern horizon that splendid constellation of the Southern Cross, which is the glory of the austral hemisphere. This consists of five stars in the form of a Latin cross, and beside it are the "Pointers," two stars of remarkable size and brilliance. You then turn towards this constellation (which is of course as familiar to the Australian as is the Great Bear to the Briton) and make the following simple calculation. You draw a line the full length of the Cross and prolong it; you then draw another line at right angles to the Pointers and also prolong it, until the two imaginary lines intersect one another. Their point of intersection is due south—and there you are, as they say in the comedy! Another piece of advice on the same subject that was also tendered to me I venture respectfully to pass on to any intending visitor to the Australian Bush. In the event of your getting bushed, and of receiving no answer to your calls, your best plan of campaign is to follow the nearest creek or river downwards, by doing which you are morally bound sooner or later to strike a homestead. If you are in doubt as to the direction of the water (which is very probable, for these creeks and rivers are



Koala or Native Bear



Kukaburra or Laughing Jackass

usually a mere series of stagnant pools), then carefully note the bases of the trees or shrubs on the banks, to see on which side the driftwood has collected. Such trifles as these are of course the mere A B C of Bush-lore, but they generally strike the new chum as quite novel, and they may also prove of genuine value to him when and if he gets bushed—a contingency that is by no means unlikely to happen.

XII

A QUEENSLAND WINTER

My second journey up to Queensland was made towards the end of May, after I had been detained for more than a week in Sydney by prolonged winter rains that caused heavy floods in the Hunter River, with a resulting interruption of the train service between Sydney and Brisbane. I boarded the train at Redfern Depot on a lovely frosty evening, and on rising from my sleeping-berth next morning at daylight I found we were passing through the lofty New England district, which at the station of Ben Lomond reaches an elevation of nearly four thousand five hundred feet above sea-level. The ground was everywhere white with a thick hoar-frost, and the cold was intense ; so that a halt and a hot breakfast at Glen Innes station proved most acceptable to the shivering passengers of the Brisbane express. From this point onward to the levels of the Darling Downs the whole of the country-side appears thickly sprinkled with huge granite boulders, many of them strangely smooth and globular in shape ; indeed one of these wayside stations had been aptly christened Stonehenge, owing to a particularly fine natural circle of upright monoliths. The whole of this stony region comprises an area of some four hundred miles square, and the clearings amidst its Bush or fields of boulders are largely occupied by orchards of apple, pear, plum, cherry, quince and apricot trees, notable at Stanthorpe, which lies just within the Queensland border.

I had long been looking forward to a winter visit in the

Northern State, where, so I was told, the climate was almost ideal from June to September. Such is the general reputation amongst Australians of the Queensland winter season, but I scarcely found the climate from my own experience equal to my expectations. The whole of June and part of July were cloudy, muggy and sunless, with heavy tropical rains at intervals, the Queensland winter in fact seeming to me a rather good imitation of a bad English summer. Of course I was told such conditions as I encountered were "exceptional"; but then I have heard that palliating epithet applied so often and in so many lands as an excuse for disappointed hopes in a much-vaunted climate. Be that as it may, Queensland is the cynosure of the Australian tourist during the winter months, on account of its (alleged) continuous dry, bright, bracing weather, on which the numerous advertising booklets of the State dwell with much insistence. I must add in fairness that the month of August was superb, with still, cloudless days and fresh bracing nights.

I arrived late at Brisbane in a very crowded train, and at the station immediately entered the Rockhampton express, in order to reach Gladstone, on Port Curtis, whence I intended to make a start for a friend's cattle station some ninety miles distant from the coast. Day broke soon after we had passed Maryborough, and for some hours we traversed a belt of practically unbroken Bush and scrub-land. The monotony of this long stretch of gum-trees and Banksias was redeemed in many places by the gay masses of the pale yellow cat's-tail wattle, which was in full bloom at this season. We broke our fast in the waiting-room at Bundaberg, a great sugar-growing centre which is pleasantly situated on the lofty banks of the Burnett River, the many fields of vivid green waving cane giving a cheerful aspect to the whole place. Thence again

into the Bush, past considerable clearings in many places, for this is one of the chief cattle-raising districts in Australia, so that the rather dismal landscape appears everywhere

“ Dotted with limber shorthorns, grazing strong,
Cropping sweet-tasted pasture, switching flies,
Dull trouble brooding in their smoky eyes.”

After some hours of this cattle country, in the early afternoon we reached Gladstone, which lies only twenty-five miles south of the tropic of Capricorn.

Gladstone is merely a small township consisting of one lengthy street lined with timber-built shops, banks and inns, and at home we should account it no better than a village, though for some occult reason it is described in the official *Queensland Directory* as possessing about five thousand inhabitants. The little town is well situated on a long rocky peninsula that juts out into the sea, but is surrounded on two sides by wide flats of reddish mud that are partly covered with mangrove scrub, whose leaves assume a lovely shade of golden-green in the winter-time. From the tiny park or reserve at the farthest point of the ridge one obtains a truly glorious panorama of mountain, sea and forest, for the untrimmed Bush feathers down almost to the one street of the township, so that in ten minutes' walking from the centre of Gladstone one can bury oneself in the dense silence of the grim primeval woodlands. Conspicuous across the waters of the harbour to northward uprises the graceful form of Mount Larcomb with its broken summit, affording a fine natural feature that gives character to the whole landscape; indeed I grew to think Gladstone and its harbour quite the prettiest spot I had seen in all Australia, its quiet beauty and soft tints reminding me of some of the much-advertised scenery on the

western coast of Ireland. Of course it is a dull place, and its hotels are not of an excellence to tempt the wayfarer to tarry here in spite of the many natural attractions ; and few persons, I was told, spend a night in quiet Gladstone except in the pursuit of business. As to myself, however, I was perforce detained here by heavy tropical rainfalls for nearly a fortnight, so that therefore I probably possess a more intimate acquaintance with Gladstone than do most Australians. And I can truly say that, in spite of the shortcomings of the chief inn, with its amazing squalor and casual methods, on the whole I rather enjoyed my unexpected sojourn in this lovely though rarely visited spot.

Gladstone is the Cinderella of the Queensland ports, and it is also one of the oldest settlements in the State, for a colony was originally planted here so early as the fifties, with the possibility of its becoming the capital of the (as yet) unformed State of Queensland. The position chosen was an admirable one, for the harbour is both deep and well sheltered, its entrance being situated inside the Great Barrier Reef, that vast coral breakwater that extends opposite the Queensland coast from Maryborough to Torres Straits. But the early colony planted here proved a dismal failure, and ever since that catastrophe the claims of Port Curtis to official recognition have been persistently but most unwarrantably ignored by successive Governments at Brisbane. All the trade and commercial interests of Central Queensland are now concentrated in Rockhampton, some seventy miles to the north ; and it seems likely that poor little Gladstone with its splendid haven will continue to remain neglected for many a year to come. Once a week a mail steamer of the Australian Union Shipping Navigation Company, a wretched old boat of an obsolete type, calls here and returns hither with mails and passengers on her way to

and from Townsville and the small intermediate ports, and the arrival and departure of this boat constitute the leading events of the week in forsaken Gladstone; otherwise the place is shunned alike by the tourist, the trader, and the speculator, in spite of its obvious natural "potentialities"—cherished word, beloved of the professional spouter and the peripatetic politician in all matters Australian! Its one and only sign of active prosperity, the meat works, are happily invisible (and unsmellable) from the town, being situated more than four miles to the east of Gladstone, and constituting a small community in itself, with its own wharf for the cargo steamers that come to carry off the carcasses of the bullocks after the slaughtermen and packers have duly performed their duties.

Historically, Gladstone can lay claim to some attention, not only by reason of its early foundation and subsequent collapse, but also on account of an erroneous tradition that has of late achieved some notoriety. For according to a report that has been circulating for some time, it was here that the renowned Spanish admiral, Don Quiros, tried to found a settlement in or about the year 1600, in which case Port Curtis might reasonably claim to represent the very first portion of Australian soil to be colonised by the invading white races of Europe. The evidence, however, on which this specious tale of early romantic adventure has been built, is not only slender, but likewise incorrect. The existence of some decaying wooden wells upon the shore, and the finding of an antique brass cannon engraved with the words "Santa Barbara," seem to have constituted the whole of the material available for constructing this Don Quiros myth; yet the late Cardinal Moran of Sydney, with more zeal than logic, eagerly seized upon this unpromising basis to build up a glowing description of the arrival of the Catholic vessel, the *Santa Barbara*, the first planting of the

cross on the great austral continent, etc., etc. As a matter of plain fact, this picturesque episode of the original white settlement in Australia turns out to be a regular mare's-nest, for it has been conclusively proved that the old wells in question were merely the remains of those dug by the unsuccessful British pioneers of Port Curtis during the past century. And as to the *Santa Barbara*, that noble galleon that bore the Spanish hidalgos and their ecclesiastical furniture, it appears that the aforesaid piece of medieval ordnance was originally found by the skipper of a disabled British trading barque on one of the small islands of Torres Straits, who used it for ballast on his voyage to Port Curtis, where, being curious and ornamental, it was later placed by one of the settlers in his garden. Nor do the mysterious words, "Santa Barbara," imply necessarily the existence of any vessel of that ilk, for most pieces of ordnance in Catholic countries at that period bore the name of this saint, who is the special patroness of artillerymen.¹ Most serious Australian historians are now convinced that it was the large island of Santo Espíritu, in the New Hebrides group, that was visited and described by the Spanish admiral in the course of his wanderings; nevertheless the legend of the so-called Spanish expedition to Port Curtis has got abroad, and has apparently even been accepted as authentic by that able Australian writer, Mr E. J. Brady, who gives it credence in his charming volume, "The King's Caravan."

Whilst I was being kept thus by the inclement weather in Gladstone, a kindly squatter of the district, who chanced to be staying at my hotel on business, took me with him on board the little motor launch, the *Penguin*, on an expedition in Port

¹ I make these observations from my remembrance of a most lucid lecture on this subject read before the "Royal Historical Society of Australia" on 28th March 1913, at Sydney, when I was present. Unfortunately, I cannot recall the lecturer's name.

Curtis, partly to fish and partly to inspect Facing Island, which lies across the southern extremity of the harbour. We left Gladstone at noon and soon were sailing, or rather sputtering, over the wide haven encircled by its many hills and islands. It seemed a strange and indeed a sad spectacle to watch this fine expanse of still deep water absolutely lifeless, save for a few sea-birds, for not a sail nor a funnel was visible anywhere. The views were superb; ahead of us lay Curtis Island and Facing Island, both of them thickly covered with Bush; behind us towered the form of Mount Larcomb, and to our right stood out boldly against the western sky the jagged outline of the long range of Many Peaks, with the triangular summit of Mount Stanley overtopping all. Skirting the rocky beaches of Facing Island, we finally anchored near the lighthouse at Gatcombe Head, its southernmost point; and here we entered a small boat and rowed to a reef, which is submerged at high tide. To these rocks were clinging by thousands long purple-shelled oysters, and I was therefore for the first time in my life enabled to make a meal off these succulent shell-fish in their own home, by opening the shells with a chisel and then scooping out their contents with a clasp-knife. It was a novel and an agreeable, if rather a greedy, experience. My attention, I may remark, was not wholly concentrated on the oyster-beds, for I observed many curious marine things on this wave-washed ledge, including a trepang, or *bêche-de-mer*, a hideous creature, in shape and colour resembling a thick black sausage. It felt elastic to the touch, and immediately began to discharge a large quantity of white sticky fluid. It seemed a loathsome object, yet its flesh is greatly prized by Chinese gourmets, who esteem it as far superior to turtle fat, and I myself have eaten *bêche-de-mer* soup with relish in some of the hotels on the Queensland coast.

Returning to our launch, we anchored off Facing Island, at a point opposite to the homestead, for there is a sheep farm on the island, which is ten miles long and practically all clothed with Bush. There was a gorgeous sunset, the sky appearing like fire behind the distant mass of Mount Larcomb, whilst the broad placid haven reflected the western glow like some great mirror of burnished gold. But in the fashion of the capricious Queensland climate, after all this sunny splendour of the evening, the ensuing morn "broke sad and grey and dim with early showers," and, what was infinitely worse, with a stiff sou'-westerly breeze from the ocean that made the anchored *Penguin* heave and bump at her moorings in the most unpleasant manner. As the morning hours wore on, however, I went ashore, despite the wind and rain, to wander along the pebbly beaches strewn with lovely shells, and thence to penetrate into the thickets inland. Some of the golden wattles and Banksias were in bloom, inviting many gay parrots and graceful long-billed honey-eaters to the floral feast. Here I spent an hour or two in botanising and rambling about the Bush, but found next to nothing of interest, save one small *Cypropedium*, or Venus' Slipper, a plant about four inches high with flowers coloured in stripes of white, green and umber. Some of the grass-trees here were of remarkable size, and one tall flowering spike that I measured was over twelve feet high.

We were duly given scones and tea at the little house, where the caretaker's wife was only too ready to welcome any chance visitors in her lonely existence on a desert island in a deserted harbour. She kept a variety of native pets, including a pair of delightfully quaint wallabies, which took milk from their mistress's hand, but fled with great leaps into the Bush as soon as they perceived a stranger. After our meal and talk, we rowed once more to the launch and made our way back to

Gladstone in a rather heavy sea, but luckily with the rising gale in our favour.

As I have said, I was detained for many days at Gladstone, awaiting an opportunity to reach my destination by means of the mail-coach to Banana. The "coach" in question had, however, no visible connection with the vehicle that is associated with its name at home, but was merely a large buggy of a most dilapidated aspect with a buck-board, and without any attempt at a head-covering. This bone-shaking apparatus was driven once a week a distance of about a hundred and forty miles to and fro between Gladstone and the inland township of Banana over the roughest of cattle-tracks, for there was no road whatsoever in the accepted sense of that term. In this vehicle His Majesty's mails were conveyed under contract from the Queensland Government to the various cattle stations and huts on the route, whilst the driver added to his official salary by taking as many passengers as could contrive to cling to the rickety framework of his coach. Twice I watched this miserable concern start at daybreak in torrents of rain, as I stood in my night garments on the upper verandah of the hotel, and there and then refused to face the chances of getting bogged in the black muddy soil or else of being compelled to camp out, perhaps for days, beside a swollen river—both of which contingencies, I was assured, were not unlikely to occur in such wet weather. So I decided not to budge till the clouds rolled by; and they eventually did so after nearly a fortnight's delay, by which date I was glad to hire at considerable cost a private buggy from a livery-stable kept by a Chinaman in the township, who had some serviceable corn-fed horses for hire.

Accordingly on the afternoon of the last day in June the required conveyance duly appeared at the hotel door, driven by an intelligent half-breed boy and drawn by two horses that

were certainly "rum 'uns to look at, but good 'uns to go," as it transpired later, for they had an exceptionally hard two days' task in front of them. Leaving Gladstone early in the afternoon and driving through the Bush, which all around these parts is always redolent of the delicious odour of the citronella, or fragrant gum-tree, we reached the village of Calliope at sundown. As we approached, great flocks of parrots and parakeets were returning from the depths of the forest and were filling the evening air with their not unmusical calls; and in particular the many gorgeous Blue Mountain parrots, with their violet heads, green wings, and red and yellow breasts, made a fine show of colour in the rays of the sinking sun. Calliope, locally shortened to "Clypie," was originally started as a centre for alluvial gold-mining, but the natural supply of that desirable metal having long since been exhausted, the place is now merely a scratch collection of shanties standing in a clearing of about a mile square in the heart of the encroaching Bush. Here we rested at a public-house in the main street, where we found rough but tolerable accommodation and fare. It turned bitterly cold after sunset, with a sharp white frost towards morning, so that after finishing my early "tea" at six P.M. I had many hours to while away in an icy parlour, where I amused myself as best I could with patience cards. Meanwhile in the adjoining bar a number of the young men of Calliope were enjoying a protracted performance on a cheap gramophone, that seemed to have been specially chosen for the vulgarity of the tunes it played. At this unmusical feast I was a most unwilling listener, not only to the odious songs, but, in the intervals of the instrument's silence, to the equally odious language of the Calliopeans, whose conversation was seasoned with perpetual repetitions of that objectionable adjective, which sounds not unlike the word "blooming" and is indeed

softened to that term by Mr Kipling in his military ballads. The adjective in question is not a pretty one, and its constant use everywhere throughout Australia is so senseless, so unnecessary, yet so painfully frequent, that either the word itself ought to be admitted as a respectable newly coined but redundant epithet to the regular Austral-English vocabulary, or else its employment without good cause ought to be so penalised by law that the expression itself in time may be finally eradicated.

At sunrise, when the cold was cruel, my driver and I were up and doing; and after the horses had been caught and harnessed, and the cramped little trap had been fitted with the baggage and the load of fodder, we set off on our long day's drive, for we had a stage of nearly fifty miles of execrable going ahead of us, and barely ten hours of daylight to perform it in. Our troubles began very soon after quitting Calliope, for the track meandered for several miles through Bush country, whose soil was a deep slimy black mud that clung like glue to the wheels of the buggy. At length we emerged from the forest of huge gum-trees and struck the bank of the Calliope River at a point opposite the large station of Cooramindy, distinguished by its long avenue of tall well-matured date-palms, which stood nobly erect above the stream. Thence we proceeded to a wretched hamlet, with a yet more wretched "hotel," owning the attractive name of Catfish, where we breakfasted on the usual tough cold salt beef, tea and damper bread, which latter is composed of flour and water, with a little salt. Around Catfish there was an interesting belt of dense scrub-land, heavily overgrown with flowering vines, where I observed white cockatoos and some splendid tropical butterflies. Amongst the various new plants I noted here for the first time was the wild hibiscus, or rosella, a member of the mallow family, which was growing in



In the Swamp

profusion by the side of the track. The rosella is a tall showy herbaceous plant or shrub, and has long narrow glaucous leaves and huge single blossoms of a deep yellow with a scarlet eye. In the moist hollows flourished clumps of the gaudy cotton bush, which from the appearance of its fluffy seed-pods is evidently related to the oleander. It bears clusters of small scarlet and orange flowers, handsome but evil-smelling, whilst from its stalk there exudes a bitter milky juice that is said to prove noxious to cattle. (By the way, I could not help smiling at the manner in which every tree, shrub, plant, weed or flower growing hereabouts is judged and regarded solely on its merits as an article of bovine diet. Cattle like it, or cattle don't like it; cattle thrive on it, or cattle sicken on it. Any other criterion or consideration simply does not exist.) Amongst the various tropical creepers I recognised the carrion vine, with its bunches of creamy-white, purple-flecked bells that exhale so sickening an odour that the whole plant has gained a very descriptive nickname amongst the settlers, whose taste in the nomenclature of their local flora is usually more realistic than refined.

Soon after leaving dreary Catfish behind we entered upon the lands of one of the chief cattle stations of this district, through which we had to pass for some miles, and where I had to descend frequently to open gate after gate, as we emerged from one paddock into the next. To my eyes, that have grown accustomed to the picturesque and finished rural life of old Europe, nothing on earth can appear more unattractive than this type of prosperous Queensland cattle-run. In the midst of a wide expanse of brown grass-land, or of land that is even yet dotted with the white skeletons of ring-barked gum-trees, uprears the gaunt homestead with its hideous corrugated iron roofs and tanks, and with only a few stunted pepper-trees to

supply shade, since every native tree near the house has long since been carefully uprooted. Scorched by the pitiless sun, or raked by the biting westerly gales, the dismal homestead mounts guard over a vast clearing of bare ugliness, with nothing for the eye to rest upon save unwieldy Hereford or shorthorn cattle, dismal drab spear-grass and the depressing anatomies of burnt trees or charred stumps. The contemplation of such a scene of pastoral prosperity is truly sufficient to turn the stomach of an æsthete, and to sadden the heart of anyone except a grazier or a philistine. There are, I am well aware, exceptions in plenty to the general statement that this type of station is bare and ugly; and most certainly any attendant hideousness of the setting is due to the individual owner's indifference or misdirected taste.

Having eventually escaped from this scene of prosperous desolation, with its interminable brown paddocks and lines of posts and rails, we crossed successfully the wide Calliope River, which is not unfrequently rendered impassable by heavy rains, and with a long pull and a strong pull we "rushed" the steep bank on the farther shore. Here we outspanned for an hour in the blazing noon, in order to eat a frugal luncheon and to rest the two sweating but game little horses, that had drawn us so well. It was an exquisite spot, typical of the usual scenery of an Australian river, with its pale jade-green waters overshadowed by gigantic blue gums and sad, drooping she-oaks; whilst in the sandy bed grew thickets of the bottle-brush, which was just beginning to hang out its lovely crimson tassels in these moist days of a premature springtide. In this pleasant retreat the birds were very numerous, even at high noon. Here for the first time I noticed the lovely little grass bird (so-called locally), a tiny long-tailed wren with jet-black head and brilliant flame-coloured breast. There were blue

and white kingfishers too, beautiful, though not so gay as their English cousins ; and the lovely dragoon-birds with plumage of bronze and sapphire darted hither and thither, flashing like jewels in the chequered lights of sun and shadow. Now and again I heard the weird cackle of the kukaburra, with its prolonged "Hoo ! hoo !" and in the flowering boughs of the tall eucalypts overhead the dear little parakeets twittered and squawked joyfully.

Starting once more in the trying heat of the afternoon, we forced our way, step by step, through black water-logged soil to the foot of the first series of ranges, where on the steep rocky banks I first perceived the presence of the zamia palm, a low-growing most elegant plant which is much cultivated as an ornament in the gardens of Sydney and Brisbane, but is banned and eradicated by the pastoralist, who declares that its handsome fronds poison his bullocks, although scientific botanists are now beginning to affirm that the zamia (which is closely allied to the valuable sago-palm) possesses properties that are in reality highly nutritious. Having clambered up the steep stony track to the top of the range, we stood still for some minutes, so as to rest the blowing horses and to admire the fine view of distant Redshirt Mountain and the plains we had lately crossed with so much toil and patience. Thence we hurried in the waning light to Dumgree Station, a pretty old-fashioned homestead with a charming garden, perched on a lofty cliff above Bell's Creek, so christened from the family of Bell, who were amongst the first pioneers to penetrate thus far from the coast. Here I was most kindly entertained for the night, for I was forearmed with a letter of introduction to the lady who lives here and dispenses proverbial hospitality to the wayfarer.

We were off from Dumgree soon after sunrise next morning,

our track leading us through very rough and stony torrent-beds, amid precipitous foot-hills. In its way, the scenery was savage and impressive, but, as I have so often observed in Australia, it never rose to the actual sense of grandeur that one associates with the Swiss Alps, or even with the more modest mountains of Wales and Scotland. On the shaly slopes there were flourishing hundreds of the curious bottle-trees, belonging to the family of the *sterculias*, those uncanny trees of Central Queensland that I had so often longed to behold in the bark and the leaf in their native home. A well-grown bottle-tree has rather the shape of a huge nine-pin; its smooth, shiny, spongy trunk stands unbroken by a single bough except at the tip-top, whence a mass of branches spreads forth well covered with fresh green foliage. And, oh joy! cattle will condescend to appreciate the leaves of the bottle-tree, which is, botanically, closely related to the much-prized kurrajong. The bottle-tree often grows to a great height, as well as to an immense bulk, and in times of drought its soft pulpy trunk is occasionally utilised to feed the starving stock. A large oak or ash bough stuck into the neck of a hock-bottle would perhaps afford a tolerable notion of the general appearance of this eccentric native tree of Capricornia.

On reaching Kilburnie Station, where was a pretty garden full of roses and pine-apples, we halted for tea and a rest, after which we proceeded through a rather pleasant and shady belt of brigalow scrub-land, until we finally reached the boundary fences of the huge cattle-run of Prairie, where the ground was practically one continuous marsh after the recent downpour. Wheeling and crying over our heads flew hundreds of the black and white ibis; also a few of the curious native pee-wits, or spur-winged plovers, which have (as their name implies) protruding bony wing-tips, as well as a strange horny mask over

the whole face, an addition which gives a most repellent aspect to this strange bird. After ploughing and wading for miles through seas of inky-black sticky mud, beneath a broiling sun, at length we urged our poor exhausted horses up to the homestead at Prairie, one of the oldest settlements in the district. Prairie itself consisted of a collection of zinc-roofed huts and sheds; the staring rawness of the house and outbuildings, joined with the dreary environment of black mud, brown paddocks and sparse grey gum-trees, altogether making up a picture of utter ugliness and desolation that quite appalled me.

Here we stopped to inquire our way, and learned that by turning at once into an adjoining paddock and following an ill-defined "pad" that wound through the tall brown spear-grass we ought to reach M——, which was our destination. And this last short stage we easily accomplished, and were fortunate enough to find the owner of M—— at home, though he was naturally far from expecting my arrival that day.

XIII

IN CAPRICORNIA

As the cattle-run of M——, where I remained as a guest for the better part of a month, was typical of the average specimen of its class in Central Queensland, with its daily routine and duties, I think it may prove of general interest to describe the place somewhat in detail. M—— was a grazier's run, a slice recently cut out of a large pastoral station which, in accordance with the present policy of the Queensland Government, had been "thrown open to selection"—that is, parcelled out into sections for any outsiders to apply for who were willing to rent them. M—— contained about fourteen thousand acres, mostly consisting of what is considered good to fair grazing land for cattle; it was intersected by the broad Callide Creek, and was also supplied with a considerable number of pools or "water-holes," as well as by a large swamp in the farthest paddock, which on most occasions swarmed with water-fowl. This piece of country had been duly taken up by the owner some eight years previously, much to the chagrin of the local squatter, who then held the whole of the immense area out of which this particular section had been carved. M—— was held on a moderately long lease, its rent being reapportioned (which usually meant raised) every seventh year by the officials of the State Land Court. It is on this rather one-sided system of leasehold tenure that the vast bulk of the occupied land in Queensland is held, the average rental of this class of holding varying from a charge of one penny to threepence per acre, which certainly seems

trifling enough to our English ideas. It must be borne in mind, however, that these "runs" are practically mere tracts of virgin Bush and thicket, and that it is incumbent on the leaseholder to erect a dwelling-house, to raise fences, to ring-bark large areas of heavy timber, to clear scrub, and more particularly of late years to keep his estate clear of the prickly pear, which is a perennial source of trouble.

M—— was divided into some half-dozen "paddocks," that varied in extent from five hundred to five thousand acres—a paddock in Australian parlance being any space of land within fences, no matter what be its actual area, large or small. In addition to this there was the homestead, a roomy bungalow of weather-boards, with ample verandahs, zinc roofs and tank, outhouses and a small enclosed garden full of rose and lemon bushes, and containing also some flowers and vegetables. The major portion of M—— consisted of primeval sparsely timbered Bush, heavily grassed beneath the trees, especially with the spear-grass that often attains a height of three feet, and consequently gives to the stranger an impression of a vast field of withered hay. Some portion of this timbered area had already been ring-barked, with the object of strengthening the growth of the herbage, for the gum-tree absorbs a good deal of the natural moisture of the soil, to the detriment of the springing grass. Besides the forest, there was also a large acreage of more or less unprofitable scrub-land, mostly composed of thickets of the grey brigalow-trees, with a fairly dense undergrowth of golden wattle (or "myall"), wilga, sandalwood, bauhinia and other native shrubs and low trees. In the middle of the station was to be found its most distinctive feature—a long sinuous open plain, well grassed and wholly devoid of trees save a few clumps of brigalow. From this unexpected natural clearing, resembling the open glade of an ill-kept English

park, there was a fine view to eastward of rocky ranges together with distant Mount Murchison, a tall, flat-topped eminence, shaped like an inverted saucerpan, which presented the chief local landmark of this district. One seldom rode across this broad sunburnt expanse of dry brown waving grass without catching sight of leaping kangaroos, or of emus in the distance strutting in the pompous yet alert manner that is peculiar to these huge wingless birds. The other interesting feature of this station was the Callide Creek, with its steep earthy banks and inviting pools of pale green water, that were shaded by she-oaks and the crimson-tasselled bottle-brush trees. One especially fine sheet of water of a curved form beneath lofty banks was known by the name of the Horse-shoe Bend.

A station of this size and character ought to carry from one to two thousand head of cattle for fattening purposes, and these beasts are usually Herefords or shorthorns, or else a cross between the two breeds. Generally speaking, the cattle seemed extraordinarily quiet and tractable, allowing themselves to be approached by anybody, provided he were on horseback and not on foot. In the hot season, however, many of the bullocks are liable to seek the dense shade of the surrounding thickets in order to escape the flies and the sun; and once lodged in these recesses, it requires no small display of skill and patience to entice them forth into the open, where the rest of the herd is being mustered. Owing to the existence of the tick pest throughout Queensland, all cattle are usually dipped at regular intervals in a solution of arsenic and other ingredients, and for this purpose they have first to be "rounded up," and then driven to the stock-yards, the beasts in each paddock being treated thus in turn once every month. The stock-yards had been erected about a quarter of a mile from the homestead, and here had been hollowed out the dipping bath, a



Cattle Country

deep sunken depression filled with evil-smelling liquid, towards which the cattle are carefully guided, one at a time, through a narrow passage of heavy timber rails. In turn each beast is made to take the necessary plunge, and thus receives the required order of the medicated bath, to emerge thence all dripping with the filthy fluid from horns to hoofs. Yet it was strange to observe how docile on the whole was the behaviour of the bullocks throughout the whole of this very disagreeable experience. This monthly operation of dipping owns the additional advantage of bringing all his cattle individually under the direct eye of the master, so that the condition of each beast can be duly noted, and any special bullock that is required can be "cut out" of the rest of the herd and driven into a separate pen. After the ordeal of the dipping has been completed, and the disinfected cattle all collected in a roomy yard adjacent to the tank, the slip rails are removed, and the whole lowing mob is peaceably and leisurely conducted back to its proper paddock.

In addition to his bullocks, the owner of M—— also kept a "mob" of brood-mares and a stallion. Good saddle and buggy horses are much in demand at the present time in the larger Australian cities, so that likely hacks and carriage horses already fetch prices in the market which would have caused amazement a few years ago. Like the cattle, the horses seemed surprisingly quiet and amenable, showing no objection to be closely approached by a rider on horseback when they were grazing in their paddock.

Existence in these remote cattle stations of the coastal region is naturally uneventful, and would doubtless to many persons prove deadly dull, were it not for the comparative nearness of pleasant neighbours, all engaged likewise in pastoral occupations. For the week-end visit has long been quite an estab-

lished institution in the Bush, whose denizens reckon nothing of long drives or rides in order to attend the social gatherings, which are usually held at one of the larger stations. I was myself fortunate enough to accompany my host to one of these reunions at a neighbour's place, about twelve miles distant. On arriving, we all received a hearty welcome, and sate down considerably over a dozen to table. Music, card-playing, tennis, bowls, billiards and conversation made a welcome change and relaxation after the monotonous and rather silent working days of the past week ; so that probably not a few Bush dwellers regard "the day that comes between a Saturday and a Monday" as the most welcome of the seven. These cheery little parties are especially appreciated by the lonely bachelor, who has no society save that of the inevitable hired married couple, who are commonly found on the average small station, when there is neither wife nor sister to act the part of housekeeper. The married couple usually consist of a young feckless pair of individuals, either lately wed or else with one eternally squalling infant. They duly arrive, and stay under contract for about six months, and at the end of that period they almost invariably leave, and almost invariably also for the same reason—the lady-help is expecting another baby (if she has one or more already), or else she is about to become a proud mother for the first time. So they duly take their departure, and then the agency in the coastal township, generally after an interval of intense discomfort to the lonely squatter, sends up another pair either with or without the *tertium quid*, and in due course the same story is repeated. As a rule this class of servants, or rather hirelings, is both incompetent and extravagant ; and her baby is usually the first, if not the sole, object of the woman's care and efforts—an attitude which is perhaps only natural on her part, but is not very satisfactory to her unfortunate

employer, who is paying husband and wife high wages for most indifferent service.

The workaday life on such a station as I have just described begins with the break of day, when the saddle-horses are run up from the home paddock and turned into a small railed enclosure near the house, so as to be ready for immediate use. Breakfast, in which cold salt beef, damper bread and porridge seem to form the chief articles of diet, is hastily eaten in the one chilly sitting-room, after which master and man mount their respective nags and ride off to perform whatever pressing duty happens to be in hand; whether it be to muster the cattle, or to ring-bark gum-trees, or to mend the fences. Cutting up firewood for the kitchen and the parlour hearth is also an occupation that daily exacts a certain amount of time, and in this humble but useful task the visitor can often afford some real assistance to his host. The men usually return for the midday meal at the house, and perhaps enjoy a short rest and a pipe, after which they again proceed on horseback to their interrupted labours, returning homewards about sunset. The primitive shower-bath then comes into use, and the clothes of civilisation are donned before sitting down to the last meal of the day, which is almost invariably called "tea" throughout rural Australia, though it often partakes more of the nature of supper or dinner. Then follow two or three hours of rest and reading, and of course of conversation, if there be a chance companion to converse with, and then an early move is made to bed, usually not much later than nine o'clock. Throughout the winter months, which are reckoned from May to September, there is always a good fire blazing on the wide hearth of the parlour, sometimes made of gum-tree branches, but more often of the native sandalwood, which latter emits a thick smoke that is more pungent than pleasant. Neverthe-

less the cheery blaze is always welcome, and it possesses the additional advantage of temporarily stupifying the horrible Bush mosquitoes, grey insects of exceptional size and ferocity known as "Scots Greys," which have been tormenting man and beast during the long hours of sunshine.

Of discomfort in this life of the Bush there is plenty and to spare, especially during the hot, tedious, relaxing months of the long summer. The winter is always regarded as the pleasantest part of the year, but the nights then are often bitterly cold, especially towards dawn, with heavy dews or hoar-frosts, so that on a visit it is as well to come provided against the drip from an unceiled tin roof with a waterproof sheet or overcoat. The icy draughts, too, penetrate everywhere through the innumerable chinks of the thin weather-boards that form the sole barrier between the wind and one's nobility in this type of dwelling. Personally, I found the best means of keeping warm in bed was to lie well wrapped in an old thick flannel dressing-gown that I had brought up with me on the earnest advice of some friends in Sydney, who knew intimately the vagaries of the vaunted Queensland climate. During the still, cold hours of darkness or of moonlight, as I lay in bed I could hear the dingoes prowling round the homestead and uttering their long-drawn howls, than which no sound can possibly be more weird or melancholy. The bitterer the night-watches, the bolder do these wild dogs become, and the nearer do they venture to approach the fortress of their arch-enemy, Man, in quest of food. On a cattle station, however, the dingo is not regarded with the same intensity of hate that his presence engenders in the sheep-owner, who regards the dingo as the most dreaded foe of his flock. For he will rarely attack a calf in sound health, seeing that he has a salutary respect for the horns and hoofs of a mob of cattle acting in self-defence.

With the breaking of day and the first warm rays of sunshine the dismal ululation ceases, and the morning air reverberates with far more cheerful sounds—the squawking of the jolly parrots as they fly overhead to seek the blossoming gum-trees; the opening matutinal hymn of the kukaburras; the screeching of the great white cockatoos as they wing their way to their feeding-grounds. But except for this brief outburst in the early hours, the whole of the Bush remains for the rest of the day marvellously silent, save for the melodious call of the piping crow, and the occasional croak of the Bush raven. The sunsets in the Bush are sometimes gorgeous in their richness of colouring, and they seem a signal for a renewal of the chorus of bird life, which helps to cheer the last hour of daylight. No doubt, from an artistic point of view, the Bush owns its beauties, especially in the short space of the wonderful evening glow, when naked gum-tree trunks appear like rosy marble columns, and a golden glory seems to hover in the leafy summits of the trees. But somehow, try as I would, I could never shake off a haunting sense of melancholy and restlessness, together with the strange sensation of being imprisoned in a huge forest. Even from my own short experience of life in the Bush, I find it easy to understand how it comes about that the dominant note of so many of the poets of Australia, from Lindsay Gordon downwards, has been one of sadness and pessimism, for after all the Bush is but a grey and brown world of withered grass and ghost-like trees, that even the brilliance of the constant sunlight and the blueness of the sky arching overhead can never render cheerful or congenial.

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It was on this remote station that I was afforded some opportunities of observing the emu in its wild state, the great

wingless bird of Australia that figures prominently, together with the kangaroo, as one of the two heraldic supporters of the coat-of-arms of the Commonwealth. Naturally wary rather than timid, with the speed of a greyhound and with powerful legs that can teach a savage dog good manners, the emu holds its own well against its enemies in the animal world, and as it is neither ornamental nor edible, and is yet harmless, it has until recently been little persecuted by Man, though naturally this denizen of the plain and the thicket has to beat a continuous retreat before the advance of settlement and the clearing of the land. The emu has a stately carriage, but its plumage is hopelessly dingy and dowdy. Indeed the sole object of marketable value connected with the emu is its handsome shiny dark green egg, a good specimen of which will fetch some shillings in the curio shops of the cities; and there also exists quite a flourishing little industry in decorating these eggs with designs and mottoes, and the shells thus treated—and quite ruined from an artistic point of view—attract purchasers in plenty. Mats or rugs made of emu feathers are sometimes to be found in homes in the Bush, but they have little use and less beauty. Of late years, however, in spite of the expressed intention of the Government to preserve this unique biped, the farmers are beginning to declare a remorseless war upon the emu, on the plea that by feeding on the fruit of the pest-pear (which the colonists of a bygone age themselves introduced) the emu commits the crime of propagating and spreading the noxious plant. A more unfair and illogical indictment it would be hard to match, for the pear fruit is eaten by innumerable birds, and in any case the alleged mischief of the emu's diet must be infinitesimal when compared with the damage caused by the supine action of the Government, which has so far done next to nothing to clear the vacant

Crown lands of the pear itself, but allows it to ramp and seed at its own sweet will. Only recently I read a report in one of the Australian papers, told with the greatest glee and pride by the narrator, as to how he and his friends had contrived to surround a mob of some five hundred emus and then to slaughter them wholesale—the sole offence of these poor creatures being merely that of spreading the prickly pear. No wonder that naturalists are growing alarmed at the prospect of the speedy extermination of the interesting and unique fauna of Australia, when one sees in print an account of such a holocaust as that just stated.

The emu, as I have said, is not attractive in appearance, and its capricious temper renders it undesirable as a pet; but the emu chick is a most quaint and pretty little creature, covered with a soft black and white striped down, and it has bright brown eyes and queer long legs. It seems little short of a crime against the first principles of humanity that so interesting a bird as the emu should be thus persecuted to extinction on so feeble a pretext.

Of the many birds which frequented the boughs of the pepper-trees round the house in the early morning hours, the bower birds were always a source of amusement to me. The species seen by me was evidently the spotted bower bird (*Chlamy-dodera maculata*), having rather the size and outward appearance of our own missel thrush, except that in the cock bird there was a bright spot of mauve on the nape of the neck. "The bower birds," writes a leading ornithologist, "form the most extraordinary group of birds found in the world," which sounds rather a tall statement on noting these homely brown thrushes of the Bush. But of course the unique characteristic of this family is shown in their æsthetic, or rather their constructive, instinct that impels them to arrange bowers and

playing-grounds in the scrub or long grass, quite apart from the building of the actual nest. These bowers vary in their material, but usually are composed of long dry grasses or pliant twigs, which are arched in the form of a bower and held fast to the ground by means of heavy pebbles, so as to make a kind of hollow run or cavern. The space outside these arbours is then cleared and strewn with a strange collection of objects, in which the shells of land-snails largely figure; but they also contain small bones, bright feathers, and other showy trifles that chance to appeal to the architect's fancy. In these curious homes not made with hands these queer birds indulge in a number of dances and games, one of which has been recognised by observant naturalists as a regular game of hide-and-seek.

There are several species belonging to this family, of which the one just described is the most common. The golden bower bird is a very handsome fellow; and still more resplendent is the male of the regent bird, all glowing with orange and iridescent black, though his mate possesses the dingiest of brown plumage. Another bower bird, of which I chanced to see a single specimen on Facing Island in Gladstone Harbour, is the elegant satin bird, with a coat like shining jet-black satin and with an eye of bright sapphire-blue. Yet, though so diverse in plumage, the bower birds are all united by that one rare instinct, which displays itself in this singular construction of homes, some very interesting examples of which are preserved in glass cases in the museums of Sydney and Brisbane. The spotted bower bird is very tame and confiding, and it has, amongst its many accomplishments, the power of mimicking other songsters, for, contrary to the absurd old legend, there are dozens of singing birds in all parts of Australia. I often searched at M—— station

for a "bower" amongst the surrounding brushwood, but was never rewarded in my attempt, and so had to rest content with the frequent sight of the feathered architects themselves.

In spite of much that was interesting, however, I was not a little disappointed by the apparent paucity both of bird and beast in this place, for I had fully expected to see many more. Besides the birds and animals of which I have already spoken, there used to fly at certain times round the homestead a small flock of the lovely crimson-winged lory, with their gay apple-green plumage relieved by the bright carmine flush beneath the wings. One evening I was lucky enough to espy a solitary specimen of the great black cockatoo, which, thanks to the untiring depredations of the skin-hunters, who regard their native birds solely through the medium of £ s. d., has now become not only very shy, but also very scarce. The great black cockatoo (*Calyptrorhynchus funereus*), which does not utter the piercing screech of his white cousin, has sable plumage, and his broad tail is barred with fiery vermilion, these parti-coloured tail feathers being greatly prized in olden times by the black-fellows as ornaments for the hair. This cockatoo is not only timid, but he does not thrive well in captivity, like other members of the same family. In the Zoo at Adelaide I saw a pair of these birds (of the southern variety, which has pale yellow instead of vermilion on its plumage) looking the very picture of resigned melancholy in their cage. They seemed healthy, certainly, but the two large funereal creatures sate almost motionless on their perch, with their heads touching in mute sympathy, to my eyes a most pathetic spectacle.

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I returned to civilisation from M— by another route, which gave me a further opportunity to see more of this coastal

region, as it led me to Rockhampton, some seventy miles north of Gladstone and consequently well within the tropics. We drove in a hired buggy as far as Double Creek, a distance of about forty miles along a track, for it was little else, that led through country that was all Bush, Bush, Bush, with here and there a ring-barked clearing, and with an occasional creek to be forded. It was a troublesome drive, for though the soil was fairly dry, there were endless paddock gates and slip rails to open and close. We crossed the Callide at a ford with the cheery name of Dead Man's Creek, where I saw some white Queensland cedars with their large yellow leaves ready to fall, for the valuable white cedar is one of Australia's deciduous trees. Otherwise, it was everywhere the same dreary landscape of long brown grass studded with gaunt gum and box trees, with glimpses through the intervening timber of long low rocky ranges clothed with dense gum-forest from base to sky-line. Now and again we passed near a water-hole, usually matted over with slime and weeds, and looking quite as filthy as the average dirty farm-pond at home. Beside one of these unattractive pools we halted for an hour at noon, to rest the horses and to make tea in the tin-can or "billy" that every Bushman carried with him on his journeys. Billy-made tea is said to taste delicious, and perhaps it may be palatable when made with fresh spring water; but I found the *bouquet de mare* in my tin mug far too potent to enjoy its contents, though I was glad enough of the modest meal of cheese and damper. I spent some time in walking round the foul evil-smelling pool, whose only redeeming feature was the quantity of lovely blue and mauve water-lilies on its malodorous bosom. Here, too, I also found two species of striking wild flowers that were new to me—a large frog-bit with triangular purple and white blossoms (*Ottelia oralifolia*) and a handsome bog-bean (*Lim-*



A Queensland River



Gladstone Harbour

nanthemum Indicum). It was amusing to watch the many tortoises sunning their ugly shiny brown bodies on the half-immersed logs, and then sliding with resounding flops into the inky water the moment they realised the presence of a human intruder. A delicate snow-white crane, that was marvelously tame, seemed far too clean and ethereal a creature to be haunting this fetid water-hole.

During the whole of our long hot monotonous drive we saw little else of interest in the way of bird or beast, except one solitary emu, which evinced no alarm at the near approach of our buggy, but continued to strut in a most leisurely manner amidst the long herbage. Late in the afternoon we reached Double Creek, where there is a boarding-house (which term implies the usual Bush inn without the usual drinking bar), and here we found rough but endurable accommodation, for which we were charged eight shillings apiece for one night. It was here that I first tasted "puftaloons," a kind of hot greasy dough-nut which is much appreciated in the Bush. I found them interesting as a novelty of diet, but neither appetising nor digestible.

Double Creek itself is a picturesque spot on the River Dee, which here flows both broad and deep, with its stream well shaded by gigantic eucalypts. There was a glorious sunset casting wonderful rosy reflections upon the calm waters of the river; and even before the glow had faded from stream and lofty tree-tops the moon had arisen in full beauty, so that the whole scene was bathed in soft silvery light. After a cool night we had a long hot morning to pass as best we could at this spot, which I spent in exploring the shady banks of the river, where amongst other things I found the so-called Mexican poppy, a handsome sturdy plant, with prickly mottled shining leaves and with large pale yellow flowers. It is considered a pest, and

obtains its popular name from having been introduced by seeds carried over-sea in the tails of some imported Mexican horses.

Soon after the stodgy midday meal we set off towards Wowan from the hotel in a brake that was driven by a reckless larrikin, whose fixed idea seemed to be to terrify his passengers, one of whom was a delicate-looking girl returning to her home at Mount Morgan. We crossed the Dee at a wide ford, and then bumped and swayed for some miles over a broad track, which seemed to be formed of petrified waves, till we came within sight of Wowan, a sordid collection of temporary huts in a clearing that marked the terminus of a light railway recently opened from the mining centre of Mount Morgan into the heart of the Bush. On nearing the railway station, the train was seen to be approaching, to the manifest alarm of our horses, which had probably never beheld a steam-engine before. The temptation proved too strong for our larrikin driver, who, with the proverbial humour of the Bush, forced his terrified horses to meet the on-coming train, with the pleasing result that they finally bolted into the adjoining scrub, and a general smash-up ensued. Luckily nobody was hurt—the young lady had prudently descended from the vehicle on our entering the township—and as our scattered baggage was lying on the ground only a few yards from the train, no inconvenience was caused to the passengers; and the only person who appeared discomfited was the culprit himself, who stood ruefully regarding a broken splinter-bar and a quantity of ruined harness, for which damage I hope he got a sound rating on his return to Double Creek.

After a weary wait at Wowan in the sleepy afternoon heat, at last I started in the train, which chiefly consisted of trucks loaded with cut blocks of timber destined for the mines of

Mount Morgan. Slowly we crawled up the valley of the Dee, whose scenery occasionally rose above the average level of deadly monotony, especially when the line threaded its way through some rocky ridges overgrown with zamia palms, wild hibiscus and the elegant white-blossomed "Wonga-Wonga vine," or wild tecoma of Australia. It was the hour of sunset when we approached the celebrated gold and copper mines of Mount Morgan, where the enclosing hills have long been denuded of their timber, so that they stood out bare and bald against the clear evening sky. Everywhere the soil and rocks showed red and yellow, and in the fleeting glories of the sunset the River Dee itself seemed a stream of liquid gold. Seldom have I beheld such a riot of warm tints as at Mount Morgan, filling the chromatic scale of colour from deep turkey red to light rose-pink, intermingled with every shade of yellow and orange. To the east the full moon was rising, and the whole place seemed transmogrified into the freakish scene of some pantomime.

Mount Morgan is perhaps the most wonderful gold mine in the world, and the story of its chance discovery reads almost like a fairy tale. The modest unsuspected gold-impregnated tump that concealed these untold riches changed hands for a mere song, and the fortunate purchasers naturally amassed wealth passing the dreams of avarice out of a small property, for the freehold of which they are said to have paid at the rate of a pound an acre. The actual area of the mine is limited, the reef itself being only about five hundred feet long by two hundred feet broad, so that in course of time this golden hillock has been levelled by continual mining operations. At the present time the supply of gold ore, after having yielded something like twenty million pounds' worth of bullion, has become less prolific, and the existing large profits of the mine are said

to be chiefly derived from the output of its copper, which seems practically inexhaustible.

Viewed in the warmth of colouring of a gorgeous sunset, the ugly spot took on a weird and fantastic beauty, whilst its red-hot slag, which fell incessantly, its lofty chimneys, and its tall standards bearing pale globes of electric light, afforded me a marvellous scene of human industry after a sojourn in the dull primeval Bush, which I had so lately quitted. The township is of no great size, but it was, I think, quite the dustiest place I have ever seen ; and during our hour's halt there I walked continuously in a thick red-dust haze, whose motes penetrated eyes, nose, mouth and garments. Mount Morgan is less than thirty miles distant from Rockhampton, with which city it is connected by a branch railway.

I duly reached Rockhampton late that night, where I settled myself at the Criterion Hotel, overlooking the broad placid Fitzroy River. This house claims to be the best hotel in Queensland, and, from my own experience of a few days spent beneath its roof, I may add that this reputation is fully justified ; and its daily charge *en pension* of the very moderate sum of ten and sixpence is less than the amount demanded at any of the wretched hotels in Brisbane. After my late residence in the Bush, the Criterion seemed a veritable bower of almost Oriental luxury ; for I fully appreciated the cool, airy corridors and verandahs, the clean bedroom, the warm baths, and the excellent fare provided. My bedroom window gave on a verandah, whence there was a fine view of the river and Quay Street below, with a lofty range of wooded hills to eastward. Almost opposite me was the long gothic Fitzroy Bridge spanning the broad stream, and upon the river bank grew numerous native fig-trees that were much patronised by the flying-foxes, whose weird forms could be seen from time to time flitting

across the disc of the moon, and whose curious chirruping in their leafy retreats for some time puzzled me as to the cause of this new and uncanny sound. Rarely have I seen such splendid sunrises and moonrises as those from my balcony at the Criterion Hotel : when the moon rose at dusk there was thrown a huge bar of deep gold colour upon the sluggish waters of the Fitzroy, of which the effect was singularly impressive.

Rockhampton is the unofficial capital of Central Queensland, and doubtless it aspires some day to become the acknowledged capital of a new State that is to be carved out of the northern portion of existing Queensland. It has a population of about thirty thousand, with a very small percentage of coloured or Oriental citizens. The town has been carefully laid out on a generous scale, occupying part of a plain on the west bank of the Fitzroy, a tidal stream of considerable breadth, but from its many shoals unsuitable for purposes of commerce. The wide streets follow the usual rectangular plan, and on all sides there are long vistas of half-built avenues leading away into the distant Bush. There are some good public buildings, notably the gothic Roman Catholic cathedral and the elegant Customs House with its graceful cupola, which forms one of the chief ornaments of the shady riparian avenue called Quay Street.

Rockhampton owes its existing and increasing prosperity in no wise to its situation, which is inland and placed on an inferior river, but to the unbounded energies of its founders. By all rules of proper selection, Gladstone, with its splendid harbour and its far superior climate, should have been chosen for the leading seaport of these parts. Yet it has so fallen out, thanks to the exertion of private persons and to the indifference of successive State Governments, that Gladstone remains little more than a village upon an empty haven ; whilst all

local trade has become centred in Rockhampton, whose wretched harbour, Port Alma, is situated on a dreary mud-flat, nearly two hours' journey by rail from the city itself. At Port Alma the large coastal vessels of the A.U.S.N. (Australian Union Steamship Navigation Company) touch twice weekly, on their going and returning trips to and from Townsville; whilst Gladstone is served by a single mail-steamer of a primitive type. Strange it is that a State Government can renounce its obvious natural advantages and permit such an anomaly.

The climate of Rockhampton has always borne an unenviable reputation for heat, which can only be expected, seeing that it lies within the tropics, and upon a low-lying plain with a lofty range of hills to eastward which intercept the ocean breezes. Even in the month of July, always reputed the coolest in the year, the thermometer often rises over 80° Fahr. in the shade; and the summer heat is said to be appalling, which I could well understand, for never have I set eyes on more enervated, languid, pale and pasty faces, especially among the women, than I did on my visit to Rockhampton. If only there were black servants, no doubt Rockhampton might prove a pleasant enough place for white people to inhabit; but of course the "White Australia" doctrine holds good here, so that the colonists of a temperate climate have to battle as best they can against the torrid warmth and relaxing air of a tropical land where Nature intended that a black-skinned race should swink. No wonder then the white man, and especially the white woman, finds the steamy valley of the Fitzroy anything but a congenial venue, and much abuse has in consequence been poured out on "the City of the three S's" (Sin, Sweat and Sorrow), wherein languid Britons have perforce to toil and moil. One local legend has it that once a Rockhampton man went on

a trip to the Old Country and died in London, after expressing a particular desire to be cremated. Cremated he accordingly was by his Australian friends, but their curiosity or affection was so strong that, after the wicker-work coffin had been duly shot into the furnace, they opened the trap-door above to see how things were getting on. To their horror, their friend in the furnace half rose in his coffin and begged them to shut the door, so as to stop the draught, as it was the first time he had felt warm since quitting "Rockie"! A similar type of yarn also relates how the man from red-hot Booligal, one of the hottest places out west, was especially permitted by the Prince of Darkness (whose guest he had become after an ill-spent life) to send back to Booligal for his blankets.

The chief object of interest to the visitor at Rockhampton is undoubtedly its Botanic Gardens, which are situated on the Ridge, a long stony stretch of upland that overlooks the city to westward. Here have been built many of the private residences of the leading citizens, for the atmosphere here is a trifle fresher, and there is a wide view over the Bush to the coastal ranges inland. These private gardens in July were full of the most lovely roses in full bloom—La France, Marie van Huth and Frau Karl Druschky being the favourite varieties grown. But it was the masses of tropical shrubs and vines that chiefly aroused my admiration, especially the trailing glory of the maize-coloured *Bignonia venusta*, and the gorgeous thickets of the *Bougainvillea*, purple, mauve and scarlet, which was then in its full pride of bloom. The Botanic Gardens themselves I considered superior to those of Brisbane, and I found the quantities of tropical trees and palms most interesting, as well as admirably arranged. There was also a most stately avenue of the Australian araucaria, or Bunya-Bunya pine, which somewhat resembles our own familiar "Monkey-Puzzle" at

home, but in Australia bears large nuts which are much prized as an article of food by the Queensland aborigines. Many of the long shady walks were lined with masses of crotons, of every conceivable colour and marking, producing a very fine effect, for I had never seen this handsome tropical foliage plant displayed to such luxuriant advantage before. Beyond the gardens lay a long lagoon of several acres in extent, which serves as the city reservoir. It is the permitted haunt of hundreds of water-fowl, which are here strictly preserved from the eternal and infernal pot-hunter, so that the bird-lover can obtain much pleasure and also much information from watching large numbers of the Queensland aquatic birds disporting themselves here without fear of a human enemy. Ungainly pelicans and skinny shags occupied the dead tree-trunks overhanging the water; the quaint red-legged and red-billed jabiru, or Australian stork, strutted in the shallows; there were numbers of white and grey cranes or egrets; and dainty avicets stepped delicately over the flat leaves of the blue water-lilies that thrust their comely heads up to the sunshine. Numbers of black duck and wood duck were to be seen swimming contentedly on the surface; and overhead there wheeled and hovered a pair of graceful sea-hawks or ospreys, with rich brown plumage and white heads. Altogether, in spite of its maligned climate, Rockhampton has its compensations, and not the least of them must be reckoned a visit to these charming and well-ordered gardens with their lush tropical vegetation and their waters teeming with native wild-fowl.

I had intended to sail from Port Alma in one of the coastal boats of the A.U.S.N. Company, in order to reach Townsville, and thence tranship in a smaller boat for Cairns, so as to visit the renowned Barron Falls. This last expedition is perhaps



An Australian Swamp



the favourite winter trip in Australia, and I had heard on all sides glowing accounts of its many beauties, but unfortunately I was prevented by some business matters of urgency, so had reluctantly to abandon this projected tour up the Queensland coast and to travel by rail direct to Brisbane.

XIV

THE NORTHERN RIVERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

IN order to visit some friends at Southport, which is close to the border of Queensland and New South Wales, I decided to make my way back from Brisbane to Sydney by way of the fertile district in the north-eastern corner of New South Wales, which is vaguely spoken of as the "Northern Rivers," for it is watered by the Tweed, the Richmond and the Clarence, all of them broad tidal navigable streams that flow from the Great Dividing Range eastward to the Pacific Ocean.

Southport itself is distant about fifty miles due south of Brisbane, and to get there involves a journey of nearly three hours through cultivated lands with many crops of pine-apples, bananas, sugar-cane and millet, varied by some stretches of uncleared scrub, which in the month of August was gay with the pale yellow blossoms of the cat's-tail wattle, which is the commonest of the many native acacias in Southern Queensland. The little seaside resort of Southport is most pleasantly situated on a narrow salt-water lagoon, which is separated by a long spit of yellow sand from the ocean, whose distant surf thunders day and night on the hard sandy beach that extends almost unbroken for many miles from distant Tweed Heads in a northerly direction. The chief hotel stands well on some rising ground overhanging the still waters of the lagoon; and from its broad balcony there is a fine view towards the ocean with its long white line of foaming breakers. On the sand-bank opposite was a large colony of pelicans that used to stand

at certain hours watching the ebb and flow of the tide, and indulging in a series of pompous antics that were very amusing to watch. Swimming in the water, the unwieldy pelican appears almost a stately bird, resembling at a little distance an unusually large black and white swan; but on land nothing can be more awkward and comical than the movement of this huge aquatic bird. The waters around Southport, both within and without the land-locked lagoon, teem with fish, chiefly rock-cod and schnapper, so that fishing engrosses a large portion of the time spent here by the residents, and also by the many visitors that find their way hither from Brisbane every week-end.

There are several private homes in Southport, but the majority of the buildings consist of boarding-houses, and though the place is almost a village when judged by the British standard of seaside resorts, yet it covers a considerable area. Some of the wealthy western squatters have built bungalows of their own here, or else rent houses by the month. There are several schools, and in particular a popular boys' boarding-school, standing in a delightful situation, which has now been flourishing for a good many years, and attracts numerous families to settle in Southport. The winter climate seemed to me absolutely ideal, with its warm, still, sunny days, its cool evenings and its fresh mornings; but during the summer months the heat becomes intense, and the mosquitoes and sand-flies are very trying, especially near the swampy outskirts of the town.

Close to the township begins the Bush, or rather scrub, where at the close of August many of the spring flowers were already in bloom, such as the trailing purple *Hardenbergia*, and its elegant shrub variety absolutely loaded with blossoms of a pale lilac colour, the handsome golden pea, and a pretty pink

Ereostemon. In one boggy spot I found quantities of the fragrant pink boronia (*B. pinnata*), which was here flourishing somewhat farther north than its usually assigned limits. The graceful maidenhair fern was also covering many of the sodden tree-stumps in the marshy soil; whilst the showy *Kennedya*, or red bean, was everywhere to be seen depending in luxuriant masses from the surrounding shrubs. This last-named plant is apt to be confused with the glory pea, or "Sturt's Desert Pea," which is only found in the stony wildernesses inland, and has not a climbing habit like the Red Bean of these coastal regions; whilst the long clustered blossoms of gorgeous purple and scarlet of the glory pea far outshine in size and splendour those of the *Kennedya*. It may be remarked in passing, that the glory pea, which I remember to have seen once in bloom in some public gardens at Milan, retains in its botanical name of *Clanthus Dampieri* a link with its original discoverer, the navigator William Dampier, who more than two centuries ago presented some dried specimens of this magnificent plant to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.

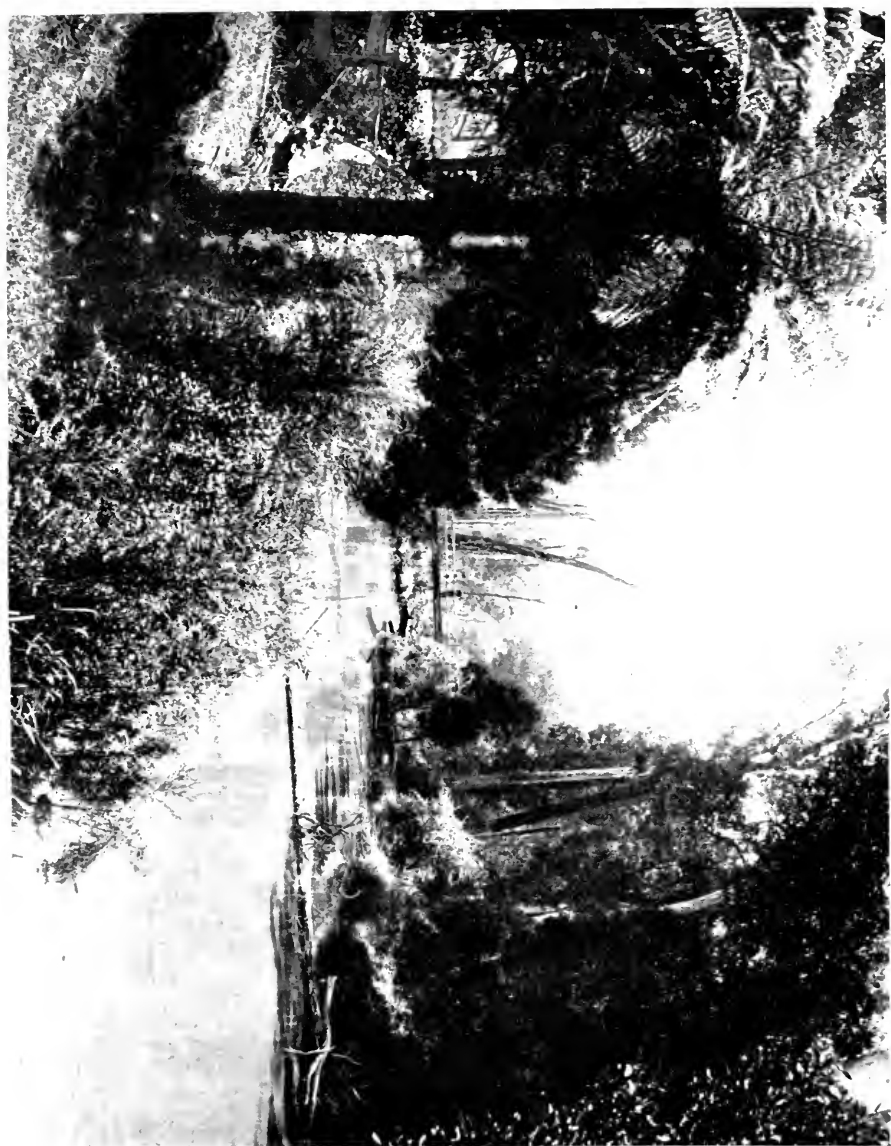
There are innumerable expeditions to be made both by sea and by land around Southport, and for this purpose the small motor boats that are so frequently to be seen plying on the Australian harbours prove most useful. One day I was taken by my friends for a picnic to Stradbroke Island, whose long narrow form serves as a barrier against the ocean for the southern half of Moreton Bay. Passing several enclosed oyster-beds, we finally landed at a little bay, where the tropical Bush was resonant with the song of numberless birds, collected here to eat the honey of the Banksia blossoms, and amongst them I noticed many of the gaudy Blue Mountain parrots. Here, too, was growing profusely the picturesque pandanus palm, or wild bread-fruit tree, the "Wynnum" of the aborigines of

Australia. Their leafy clumps of spiky leaves are furnished with clusters of fruit, resembling pine-apples, that are attractive to the eye but quite useless for human food.

On another day I was driven through the Bush to Nerang, a township on the broad river of the same name, and the centre of a very rich agricultural district producing crops of maize, bananas, sugar-cane, and also large fields of arrowroot, which I had never seen growing before. From the little hamlet of Benoa, on rising ground, I obtained a splendid view of this extensive cultivated marshy plain, which is screened to southward by the imposing mass of the Macpherson Range.

Towards the end of August I left Southport one day about noon, and had a twenty-mile journey by rail to Tweed Heads, passing on the way the boundary-line between the States of Queensland and New South Wales. Tweed Heads and the adjoining hamlet of Coolangatta have of late years gained some degree of popularity as watering-places, not only for the people of Brisbane, but also for wealthy Victorians, who travel northward so as to avoid the sharp wet winters of Melbourne. I did not notice any particular attraction in these places, which looked dusty and low-lying, though there was a fine sea running outside Point Danger, the northern of the two Heads which jut out into the ocean beyond the bar at the mouth of the Tweed. Here I embarked on the river steamer *Booyong*, which, after following the course of the channel that runs within a few yards of the bar and the outside breakers, began to steam slowly up the estuary of the Tweed River. The banks on either side were for the most part well under cultivation with crops of sugar-cane and millet on the alluvial soil, and with groves of bananas above on the slopes of the rounded hillocks, where the river-frosts do not so readily affect the young plantations. The scenery of the Tweed, though it has been vastly overrated

in the local guide-books, is undeniably beautiful ; and to the calm broad waterway with its surrounding greenery the distant Macpherson Range forms an admirable background. What yet remains of the dense scrub that within living memory once covered the whole of this rich valley is purely tropical in character, although the Tweed River actually lies some hundreds of miles south of the tropic of Capricorn. A few of the marshy islets, such as Stott's Island, have happily been left untouched, so as to give the tourist some idea of the pristine state of this valley ; and the charm of what remains cannot fail to cause regret that no more was spared of its marvellous vegetation. The tall soft-wood trees with dark glossy foliage were absolutely swathed from base to crest in festoons of creepers and lianas, amongst which the creamy clusters of the graceful Wonga-Wonga vine showed conspicuous. Elk-horn ferns and various orchids could be observed clinging to the branches ; and on the black oozy soil beyond the fringe of mangrove scrub were flourishing masses of the swamp or crinum lilies, with white scented blossoms and broad pale green leaves. There were many groups of the bangalow palm (which might well be named the Australian palm), often of immense height, light and pliant as a willow wand, each tree with its white tassel-like bloom hanging beneath its crown of waving fronds ; and these palms were sometimes seen in company with the heavy-looking cabbage-tree palms of New South Wales. The steamboat touched at many little settlements, where scarlet coral-trees and purple Bougainvilleas made patches of brilliant colour against the vivid green of the cultivated crops. Towards sunset we approached the goal of our journey, the township of Murwillumbah, a singularly dusty, ugly, sordid place set in glorious scenery and with the stately peak of Mount Warning reflected



in the broad bosom of the placid Tweed. This mountain, though of no great elevation, being little more than three thousand feet in height, is nevertheless one of the most impressive peaks in all Australia, for it is very steep, with a cloven craggy summit, and has a sheer precipice of rock on its northern flank; moreover, its towering isolated form affords a prominent landmark out at sea for all ships passing between Brisbane and Sydney.

After sleeping the night here in a tolerable hotel, I left Murwillumbah next morning at dawn, a true Turneresque sunrise in a thick river mist, with the sunbeams gilding the naked crags of Mount Warning, which overtopped the white fog wreaths of the Tweed valley. After a couple of hours' travelling in the chill morning air we reached Byron Bay, the easternmost point of the Australian continent, where there is a small township with a port, near the mouth of the Richmond River. It seemed a pretty spot, with its sandy flats close to the ocean beach all carpeted with thousands of gay spring flowers. After a halt of twenty minutes for a dyspeptic breakfast of strong tea and cold scones, we re-entered the train and proceeded slowly uphill, thereby obtaining a fine panorama of the ocean, the mountains and the surf-vexed coast-line behind us. From Byron Bay onward to Lismore our route lay through a very rich dairying district, mostly cleared and fairly well populated: a district that only a generation ago lay practically untouched, and was known consequently by the name of the "Seventy-mile Scrub." Now only a few chance patches of tropical thicket and jungle survive to remind the traveller of this no-long-distant aspect of the country. Much as I am in duty bound to praise so solid and patent a proof of human industry and enterprise, I could not repress a feeling of regret (very reprehensible, I admit) for the destruction of so

much natural beauty, in order to feed the uninteresting animals that I saw browsing contentedly from the train window. Gone for ever are the palms and the orchids and the lilies, the gorgeous birds and the gentle animals, to be replaced by bare pastures and railed paddocks, and by an abundance of imported weeds—the thistle, the lantana and the horrible *siderachusa*. Such is the evolution of a prosperous settlement. God planted a garden, and Man has transmogrified it into a farm. But of course my lamentation is not intended to be serious ; it is but the wail of an eccentric.

Lismore, where we waited half-an-hour with nothing to swallow except mouthfuls of rich white dust, seemed a prosperous place, with a large brick Roman Catholic cathedral to give distinction to the town. From Lismore to Grafton, which was my destination, it was a six hours' journey, by way of Casino and across the Richmond River. The pace of the train was of unexampled slowness and the scenery nothing but a featureless region of Bush with its eternal gum-trees and withered grass, with now and again a dirty water-hole—a district equally uninviting to the eye of the keen agriculturist or the sensitive artist. It was a relief, therefore, when at last we reached the commonplace but prosperous valley of the Clarence, and steamed into the station of Grafton.

Grafton, which was laid out by the same architect who planned the city of Melbourne, is a picturesque town with broad streets planted with long avenues of shady trees, chiefly camphor laurels, which grow to an immense bulk in this warm humid climate. The Clarence is here over half-a-mile across and has a noble appearance ; far to westward the long purple line of the distant New England ranges looms against the skyline. The town is divided into two portions, that on the north bank of the Clarence being the older and original township,

which is of some antiquity for Australia, and can boast of many gabled buildings of a past generation. On the opposite bank stands South Grafton, of very modern growth, but confidently expected to outshine the parent settlement across the water, what time the projected northern railway-line from Sydney is completed and the rich districts of the Dorrigo and others to southward are opened up to commerce. Steamers for passengers and huge punts for carriages ply between North and South Grafton at frequent intervals throughout the day and night, and for these local benefits of transport no fee is charged, the whole of this river service being "run" for the convenience of the citizens by the Government. In mid-stream lies the long form of Susan Island, left intact to serve as a public park or reserve and still almost covered by tropical Bush, through which some paths have been cut amidst the dense undergrowth of lantana, which hateful weed seemed to be more in evidence on the shores of the Clarence than in any other place I visited in Australia. It was on this islet that I noticed, rather to my surprise, the dreaded nettle-tree growing freely. This tree, whose presence constitutes one of the terrors of the Queensland tropical scrub, bears large heart-shaped leaves, the merest touch of which on the bare skin is usually enough to put the sufferer on his guard against a second contact with the minute poisonous hairs that cover the under side of the leaf. Horses when sweating are said to be especially affected by this noxious tree, which is alleged even to send them mad and to make them plunge off into the Bush, so acute are the agony and irritation set up by the sting.

The country around Grafton is much admired locally, for Australians living in a sparsely peopled land as yet only partially redeemed by agriculture prefer the scenic results of human industry rather than the unspoiled aspect of Nature ;

whereas we Europeans, on the other hand, who are thoroughly accustomed to the sight of close cultivation, affect to find a greater beauty in the wild undeveloped regions. Indeed, to the British eye, the valley of the Clarence, though not without a certain charm, is not remarkably attractive with its prosperous holdings, its crops of lucerne and barley, and its fields well covered with the white-flowering clover of England. There is, however, a fly in the agricultural ointment of the valley of the Clarence, and that is the presence of the beautiful but dreaded water-hyacinth, a pest that has invaded the Northern Rivers of New South Wales in recent years, much as it has already given trouble in the waterways of Florida. This bladder-like aquatic plant may be observed in almost every neighbouring pool and creek, where it forms a dense firm matted carpet upon the surface of the water, sufficient to impede all navigation in the smaller rivers; and though determined efforts are at last being made to clear the streams of this suffocating weed, it must be many a long year before the detested hyacinth is finally eradicated. Like all vegetable pests in Australia, the water-hyacinth (which can often be observed growing in our hot-houses at home) is a foreign importation. Its introduction to the Northern Rivers is typical of the careless and innocent manner in which such a calamity takes its rise. A few years ago a resident of Grafton was on a visit to Sydney, and whilst there went to inspect the Botanic Gardens at Farm Cove. Here he, or she, was much taken with a beautiful aquatic plant with a lovely purple blossom that was growing in one of the fountains of the gardens. A specimen was demanded and received, with the result that two small wilted bulbs were brought back from Sydney and duly planted in the waters of Swan Creek, a little outside South Grafton. In course of time the aforesaid bulbs flourished and bloomed, and so greatly were they admired

that other persons were induced to ask for specimens, with the ultimate result that is only too visible on all sides to-day. This modern edition of the *Growforevva aquitalis* has increased at an alarming rate, and now the farmers cannot keep pace with the propagation of this elegant pest-plant, which is usually pulled up by the roots and then allowed to float down stream in masses towards the main river, where the tenacious weed slowly dies after its contact with the salt tidal water. To make one realise the extraordinary density of the covering formed by the hyacinth, I was shown some young she-oaks growing on the surface of its matted vegetation in a pool that was said to be about fifty feet deep.

Walker's Hotel, in South Grafton, where I lodged during my stay, was a picturesquely situated house, with its many broad balconies overhanging the river and offering wide views of the broad stream and the far-away New England ranges. It was a pleasant spot; but I found the climate of Grafton more trying than any other in Australia, for nowhere can I recall such a close, humid, relaxing atmosphere, nor such thick carpets of dust everywhere (except perhaps at Mount Morgan). Even in the latter part of August the usual temperature was that of a hot summer's day at home, though the nights were generally cool and sometimes even fresh. Whilst at Grafton I was fortunate enough to be taken for some long drives into the surrounding country-side, at that time all radiant with the fresh spring tints. Everywhere was the mark of undoubted prosperity, and assuredly, when the railway from Sydney is extended so far, Grafton, and especially South Grafton, will "go ahead" at a tremendous pace. At present the town and district are practically served by steamboat from Sydney, which involves a thirty-six hours' journey. People with little or no luggage often make use of the motor cars that run daily

between Grafton and Glen Innes, a hundred and twenty miles distant on the main line from Brisbane, but it is a long and costly trip. But when the new line is completed hither, and the intervening Clarence spanned by an iron bridge at Wilson's Hill, and the whole coastal system of railway-lines is thus linked up, then the quickest and most direct route from Sydney to Brisbane will pass through expectant Grafton. For many years commercial intriguing and jealousy in Sydney have operated to prevent this natural consummation, but the time seems at last to be approaching when the outlined scheme will become an established fact.

It was from Grafton that I made my last incursion into the depths of the Australian Bush. In spite of its monotony, and even its silence and sadness, there is an undoubted charm to be found in these vast expanses of forest, which grows even on a stranger. And how lovely is the half-hour before the sunset, with its animal and bird life awaking to activity, with the magpies calling and the crimson-breasted parrots screaming joyously overhead, and with the naked tree-trunks metamorphosed into glowing rose-pink pillars! The course of the Orara River was very beautiful in the midst of the woody wilderness, a thread of luxuriant foliage and gay flowers running through the centre of the russet desert of gums and grass. The bloom of the feathery golden wattles was perfuming the soft warm air; the snow-white clematis was climbing unchecked over the red-tasselled bottle-brush trees; and beside the clear waters of the stream were great masses of exquisite maiden-hair. Somehow, to my surprise, I felt a touch of regret to think I was probably seeing the real Bush for the last time.

I arranged to return to Sydney by the North Coast Navigation Company's steamer, *Kyogle*, which was due to leave Grafton

wharf at sunset. In order to see something of the lower reaches of the Clarence River, I decided to start early in the afternoon on one of the small local boats, which was timed to cover the thirty miles or so between Grafton and the township of Maclean in about three hours. As a matter of fact the wretched little vessel took over five hours on this journey, so that it was quite dark by the time I reached Maclean, where the *Kyogle* was due at 9 P.M. Owing to the sudden rising of a thick river-fog, however, the expected steamer never appeared till 10 A.M. on the following morning ; and as it seemed to have been nobody's duty to telephone the cause of delay to Maclean, I spent the whole night on the hotel verandah at Maclean in momentary expectation of my steamer's arrival. Fortunately for me, it was a fairly warm night for the cold season, and I passed the long hours of waiting pretty comfortably wrapped up in a rug in a long chair, where I dozed at intervals and watched the shooting stars and listened to the cuckoo-like notes of the mopokes in the dense Bush across the river. My only companion in misfortune was a commercial gentleman, who was thrust unceremoniously out of the hotel at closing time in a highly cheery and uproarious condition, which sadly deteriorated as the fumes began to subside in the chilly hours of the dawn.

I was greatly relieved when at length I heard the welcome whistle of the *Kyogle* and got on board that antiquated but serviceable old tub. I had still to endure many hours of patient dawdling and of gazing upon the tame scenery of the Clarence valley, for the *Kyogle* stopped with exasperating frequency so as to take in cargo, chiefly maize, sugar-cane and timber. In addition to cane and timber, however, our boat also gave a temporary lodging to a number of squealing odoriferous black pigs, whose near presence filled both our ears and our nostrils

for the remainder of the voyage to Sydney. After a long, hot, weary day spent in steaming thus slowly past the dull, commonplace fertile flats of the Clarence, towards sunset we sighted the Heads, where again we anchored so as to take in a large supply of the oysters which here cover the rocks. To our right, amidst the sand-dunes, I could espy the little watering-place of Yamba, whither the Graftonians hie from time to time to refresh themselves with the ocean breezes and with surf-bathing, and to feast on the local oysters; whilst in the thick scrub behind the sandy beaches of Yamba grow innumerable native roses and flannel flowers for the children to gather. I always think these primitive Australian seaside villages, with their yellow sands, their delightful surf and their lovely wild Bush, are particularly fascinating; and their unspoiled charm appealed in a special degree to myself, as coming from a small overcrowded island with its vulgarised and densely packed resorts, where one usually finds only a grey sky and a cold sea, a dull suburban neighbourhood and a repetition of the amusements and crowds of a big city.

Crossing the bar at the mouth of the Clarence is never an easy operation, and can only be successfully accomplished in certain states of the tide, and also in calm weather. On this particular occasion, however, Fortune was kind, so that we were quickly tossed over a turbulent stretch of shallow water into the deep ocean beyond.

Next morning I awoke to find the *Kyogle* passing the mouth of the Manning River, after which we stood in for some time pretty near the shore, and at one point threaded our way between the mainland and the Seal Rocks, whereon dozens of huge brown seals were lazily sunning themselves. In the vicinity of Port Stephens, one of the best of the neglected minor ports of New South Wales, the coast-line was distinctly bold,



The River Clarence



Clarence Heads



with tall basaltic cliffs and wide mysterious caves, into whose open mouths the surf poured with a roaring sound. Otherwise, all day we saw nothing but the low sandy beaches and the long forest-clad featureless ranges, which constitute the endless monotony of the Australian shores and offer little more of variety of scenery than the vast plains of the interior.

“ Not as the song of other lands
 Her song shall be ;
 Where dim her purple shore-line stands
 Above the sea.
 As erst she stood, she stands alone ;
 Her inspiration is her own.
 From sunlit plains to mangrove strands
 Not as the song of other lands
 Her song shall be.”

It was nearly nine o'clock at night when at last we sighted the lights of Manley beach with the long form of the North Head of Sydney Harbour, which loomed out large and looked romantic with the crescent moon lamping its sharp outline; and it was after ten o'clock when the *Kyogle* crept into her berth at Darling Harbour in Sydney city, a good fourteen hours behind her scheduled time of arrival.

XV

CONCLUSION

MY last overland journey on Australian soil was made from Sydney to visit some relations at Adelong in New South Wales, and thence on to Melbourne, where I had arranged to join my homeward-bound ship. Leaving Redfern station late one evening towards the middle of September, I reached Cootamundra at daybreak, and there changed into the Cootamundra-Tumut local train. It was a wearisome four hours of travelling as far as the small station of Mount Horeb, whence I was to proceed by coach for the last ten miles to my destination, Adelong, which is only some twelve miles' distance from Tumut, the terminus of this little branch-line. The train bumped and jerked along the weedy levels between lines of rounded foot-hills, mostly denuded of their timber, so that the scenery would certainly have appeared dull and featureless but for the beautiful soft blue haze in the distance that always serves to lend enchantment to every landscape throughout Australia. After a couple of hours spent thus, at length we reached, and long dawdled at, the principal township of the western end of the valley, Gundagai, an unlovely, staring place perched on a steep hill-side, whence its inhabitants can afford to survey with stoical indifference the vagaries of the treacherous Murrumbidgee, which some years ago completely swept away the original settlement in its flood waters. Albeit ugly and raw, the name of Gundagai started some verses of Paterson's ringing in my brain, so that I

could not help taking a faint interest in the dreary spot :

“ The mountain road goes up and down,
From Gundagai to Tumut town.
And breaking off, there runs a track
Across the foot-hills grim and black,
Across the plains and ranges grey
To Sydney city far away.”

On leaving Gundagai, the railway crosses the broad bed of the Murrumbidgee River, and in due time it brought me to Mount Horeb, where I secured a box-seat on the mail-coach with its four skinny but capable horses, that drew their heavy burden at a cantering pace all the way to Adelong.

Adelong itself is a small township of one long street, but boasts of respectable austral antiquity, for was it not founded in the very early days of the gold-mining boom of the fifties ? There still exist one or two local gold mines in some sort of working order, though business has grown very slack here nowadays, and Adelong seems to-day a veritable Australian sleepy hollow, for which state of things I at once conceived a liking for the quiet little place, nestling in the hollows of its swelling hills and perpetually soothed by the murmur of its rushing stream. The surrounding slopes have long been cleared of their timber by the devastating gold-seekers of a previous generation ; and they would look bare and dreary but for the many clumps and thickets of the sweet-brier, which has clothed much of their arid nakedness with a mantle of vivid green verdure starred with myriads of pink roses. This fragrant shrub is constantly abused as an imported pest, and open agricultural war has been declared upon it throughout the State ; yet here, at Adelong, it seemed to me to be flourishing merely upon stony, useless soil, whilst its gay blossoms and its delicious wholesome odour offer at least some compensation

for its existence, which is more than can be adduced on behalf of most of the vegetable pests of Australia.

I have pleasant recollections of salubrious little Adelong. There was a long low rambling inn, with broad verandahs hung with clambering grape vines, and set in the midst of a garden that was gay with cannas and pink and white bouvardia. I had a large clean room ; there was plenty of fruit and cream ; there was kind attention on the part of the excellent family who kept this hostelry ; and its charge was the very moderate one of six shillings a day. I was sorry not to have been able to tarry longer at Adelong, where the willow-shaded stream and the distant wooded ranges on the Tumut side combined to reproduce a picture of the Apennine scenery around Bologna—an illusion of place that was fostered by the presence of many tall poplars and of enclosures filled with purple lucerne in the broad bosom of the valley.

Bird life was interesting here, for I noticed numbers of the pretty little parakeets, or love-birds, with green and pale yellow plumage, that flew twittering from bush to bush ; and at sunset the handsome scarlet-breasted rosella parrots would swoop down with noisy cackling upon the fruit-trees in the gardens. The lovely little native fan-tailed blue wren, which from its sweet note is sometimes known as the superb warbler (*Malurus cyaneochlamys*), and has striking plumage of jet-black and greyish-blue, hopped about the verandahs and the garden paths in the most friendly and confiding spirit. The native “Willie Wagtail,” or shepherd’s companion, which is in reality a fly-catcher (*Motacilloides tricolor*) is also a popular favourite, being found in all parts of Australia, both in the Bush and on the open plain. This bird appears spruce in black and white with a rather unwieldy and jerky fan tail, and is fond of flying just ahead of the horseman as he rides along. His antics are

very amusing and abrupt, and he loves to tease dogs and cats by suddenly darting down to peck their heads or twitter shrilly in their ears, for he is utterly without fear or respect. This wagtail has a sweet note, and he repeats constantly by day and by night a little song, which sounds like the words, "Sweet pretty little creature!"

I noticed a good many eagle-hawks hovering over the valley of the Adelong, and on a small sheet of water outside the township I used often to watch three pairs of pelicans, whose huge ungainly forms almost covered this tiny pool of their selection, whereon they used to lie motionless for hours, keeping a sharp look-out with their great staring red eyes. I was told that pelicans were rare visitors to Adelong, and I can only hope the odious sportsman, or sportsboy with his pea-rifle, left these poor bulky innocents in peace. With one imported English bird I was glad to renew my acquaintance, and that was the goldfinch, with its gay livery and its melodious twitter, that found an ample supply of food in the acres of thistles, which seemed to my uninitiated eyes to form the crops most in evidence on the rich alluvial soil near the river, where Mother Nature was apparently allowed to raise what best she pleased. I never saw such a profusion of thistles in my life as at Adelong; there was, of course, the familiar Scotch thistle, which ramped unchecked everywhere; there was a yellow star thistle; also a mauve star thistle; and last, but far and away the worst, was a terrible species known as the "cock's spur," a large bluish-grey plant with yellow flowers, more like a hawk-weed than a true thistle, but very severe on thinly clad ankles.

I never breathed a purer air than that of the hills of Adelong, nor could any incense-breathing morn of poetry taste sweeter than this atmosphere that was ever redolent of the sweet-brier; and o' nights the stars seemed to shine in the deep blue

firmament with a brilliance I have never seen equalled elsewhere.

The journey from Adelong to Melbourne necessitated the spending of a night, or rather part of a night, at Cootamundra, which is notorious for its heat in summer, and is at any time of year rather an unattractive place on a dreary plain. At three A.M., therefore, I was aroused, and with a number of Melbourne-bound commercial travellers scrambled in the chilly starlit morning on top of a crowded omnibus, that took us to the station, where we caught the Melbourne express. It was daylight by the time we reached Junee, but the country as surveyed from the carriage window exhibited little of beauty or interest to the tourist, until we approached Albury, the frontier station of New South Wales and Victoria, where one has to descend in order to enter another train, since the two States are still using different gauges for their railways. Around Albury the neighbourhood is well wooded, with distant views to eastward of some of the outlying spurs of the Victorian Alps; and soon after quitting the station I obtained a glimpse of the majestic Murray, the monarch of Australian rivers, which forms the boundary between Victoria and New South Wales. The remainder of the journey was dull and uninteresting to the last degree, so that I was glad to reach Melbourne in the early afternoon, after sitting for five hours in a very crowded train from Albury.

I made my headquarters during my stay in Melbourne at an excellent private hotel near the top of Collins Street, where the charge was twelve shillings a day for good service, fare and accommodation. Generally speaking, and also judging from published official statistics, the cost of living in Melbourne is lower than in Sydney; and to a stranger travelling hither direct from the latter city the improved manners and the



reasonable courtesy to be found everywhere in the Melbourne streets and shops offer a refreshing change from the gratuitous rudeness one so often encounters in Sydney, where the labouring classes are apt (so it is sarcastically said) to consider civility identical with servility. What actually causes this marked divergence of social demeanour in the two cities it is difficult to decide. Some declare it to be the result of a sub-tropical climate acting on the British temperament; others ascribe it to the attitude of the State Labour Government; and I myself offer no suggestion as to the true reason of this circumstance, and can only endorse the fact.

As the reader doubtless is already aware, Melbourne has enjoyed a phenomenally rapid growth both in population and prosperity. Sixty years ago the city possessed scarcely thirty thousand inhabitants; whilst by the close of the century the census showed a rise to about half-a-million. Of late there has been a tendency for this speedy increase to slacken, so that at the present time Melbourne may be described as remaining almost stationary, although her historic rival, Sydney, continues to expand at a rate which many thoughtful persons consider alarming, and even harmful to the State. But Melbourne is not merely a large city; it is a thoroughly adequate city also. It has not suffered from the haphazard growth of Sydney, but was from the first planned and extended on spacious lines for the increased population that its founders unerringly predicted. The result of this happy foresight has proved most beneficial to posterity, so much so that the present generation of citizens ought truly to rise up and call their early civic fathers blessed.

Melbourne is laid out on the usual rectangular system, with broad streets alternating with narrow lanes, all perfectly straight and cutting one another at equal intervals. Of the main thoroughfares, the finest is, of course, Collins Street, run-

ning east and west across a broad valley from the main railway station to the Treasury Building in Spring Street, some three miles in length. It is one of the stateliest streets in the world, and may be classed in the same category with Fifth Avenue in New York, the Thames Embankment and the Champs Élysées of Paris. It is lined on either side with a series of handsome buildings, many of which are individually well worthy of attention from an architectural standpoint, and all showing to the best advantage on this noble avenue with its ample space and air for all. In Spring Street, which runs at right angles to Collins and Burke Streets, and occupies the crest of the ridge, rise the various Government buildings, including the fine classical pile of the Federal Legislative Chamber and the smaller but more elegant Treasury Building, a beautifully proportioned palace in the style of the Italian Renaissance. In addition to adequate public offices, Melbourne is also provided with an organised system of public parks and gardens, which lie just outside the commercial zone of the city. These are well planted and carefully kept; and in particular the broad St Kilda Road, three miles long, that connects the city with its chief marine suburb of St Kilda, is a splendid and indeed unsurpassed boulevard with flower-beds and sidewalks the whole of its length.

The Botanic Gardens, though lacking in the exquisite views that render those of Sydney so attractive, have been most skilfully laid out, and their upkeep suggests both good taste and no stint of expenditure. That eminent Australian botanist, the late Mr Guilfoyle, is generally credited with the high standard maintained in these gardens, which have been so planned as to screen the more delicate plants and shrubs of warmer latitudes from the frosts and sharp southerly winds that are so prevalent in Victoria. The visitor will be astonished at the luxuriance

and variety of the many sub-tropical trees and plants that are to be seen growing freely here. The water garden, with its masses of the blue Queensland lily and the splendid pink sacred lotus of Japan flourishing side by side, particularly held my attention. As at Sydney, long borders have been reserved for the proper display of the native flora, which in its flowering season never fails to draw hither large numbers of interested sight-seers.

In the city itself the broad and busy streets always present a gay and well-thronged appearance, especially at the classic angle formed by Collins, Burke and Flinders Streets, known as the "Block," whose pavements and arcades form a sort of shopping promenade at certain hours of the day for well-dressed Melburnians. Another, and a very diverse centre of social interest, is to be found in Little Bourke Street, a species of unofficial Chinese quarter, one of the long narrow lanes lying between two broad thoroughfares. To this dingy alley still clings a sinister reputation, though it looked dull and quiet enough to my eyes, as I stood on its narrow pavement, watching its dirty white loafers and a number of equally frowzy unwashed Orientals, who were anything but picturesque in their slop-clothing of European civilisation. Some of the grimy cracked windows exhibited Chinese fireworks, porcelain and curios; and many of the eating-houses displayed bills of fare written both in Chinese and English characters, inviting the passer-by, if so disposed, to partake within of bird's-nest soup, shark's fins and other Celestial dainties. Most of the shops were decorated with the new standard of the Chinese Republic with its seven gaudy stripes, in addition to framed portraits of Dr Sun-yat-sen.

There are, of course, the usual sights of a large city to be inspected in Melbourne. The Art Gallery, the Natural History

Museum, the Public Library, the domed Exhibition Hall (now utilised as the State Parliament House of Victoria), the two cathedrals (both caricatures of gothic churches at home), and Federal Government House, a big Italian villa with a tall campanile that is a conspicuous feature in all views of Melbourne. In the Art Gallery I was distinctly disappointed. The rooms are ill lighted, the pictures are ill arranged, and the whole gallery is in every way inferior to that of Sydney. This is all the more remarkable, as, owing to the munificent Felton Bequest for the purpose of buying pictures, one would have naturally looked to find a better and more representative collection. There are, however, a few really good works by eminent artists, both old and modern, including some fair portraits of the old English school and a magnificent example of Corot; but all the same the gallery seemed poor, considering its handsome endowment.

Taken as a whole, with its broad streets, its excellent municipal service, its admirable system of public parks and its many handsome buildings, both public and private, Melbourne possesses in a marked degree the air of a capital, so that it seems to me a thousand pities that its existing status of temporary though unacknowledged capital of the Commonwealth of Australia cannot be made permanent. Apart from its amplitude and stately aspect, Melbourne is also, from the practical point of view of public convenience, well suited to be the recognised centre of Federal administration, since it is situated within a day's journey of three of the State capitals—Sydney, Adelaide and Hobart—and can also be easily reached from Brisbane and Perth. Under these circumstances it seems most regrettable that the inveterate jealousy of Sydney should be permitted to interfere with the existing arrangement, which seems to satisfy the requirements and meet the needs of the majority of the people of Australia; or that vast sums of public

money should be jeopardised, at a time of most pressing financial needs for economic development and national self-defence, in the proposed erection of a brand-new Federal capital in the remote valley of Canberra.

I have already spoken of the shady parks and of the stately streetarchitecture, but I have not yet mentioned what is perhaps the most striking of the modern improvements in Melbourne—namely, the cleansing of the River Yarra. Till recent years this stream, which flows into Port Phillip, a couple of miles below the big Flinders Street wharves, was a malodorous eyesore, whose inky waters and unsavoury odours were being continually inveighed against by visitors to Australia, even so late as the nineties. But the Municipality since those days has worked a revolution in the sewerage system of the city, and has not only brought health to the citizens, but has even managed to convert the once filthy Yarra into a cleanly stream of pleasure. For its banks are now covered with shrubs and flower-beds, whilst the upper reaches of the stream are picturesque, with their fringe of giant weeping willows, whose pendant boughs are dipped in the flowing waters. Pleasure boats and launches ply constantly up and down the Yarra, and its crowded local regatta has for some years past formed one of the annual civic festivities.

The intense rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne, which is now exerting so malign an influence on Australian politics with regard to the adoption of a Federal capital, is a never-ending source of discussion, so that one hears the two cities praised or belittled or compared, till one grows heartily weary of the whole profitless subject. Speaking impartially, I should say that as a residential city Melbourne, with its finished appearance and more orderly social life, is preferable to Sydney, with its narrow congested streets and its air of restlessness. On the other hand,

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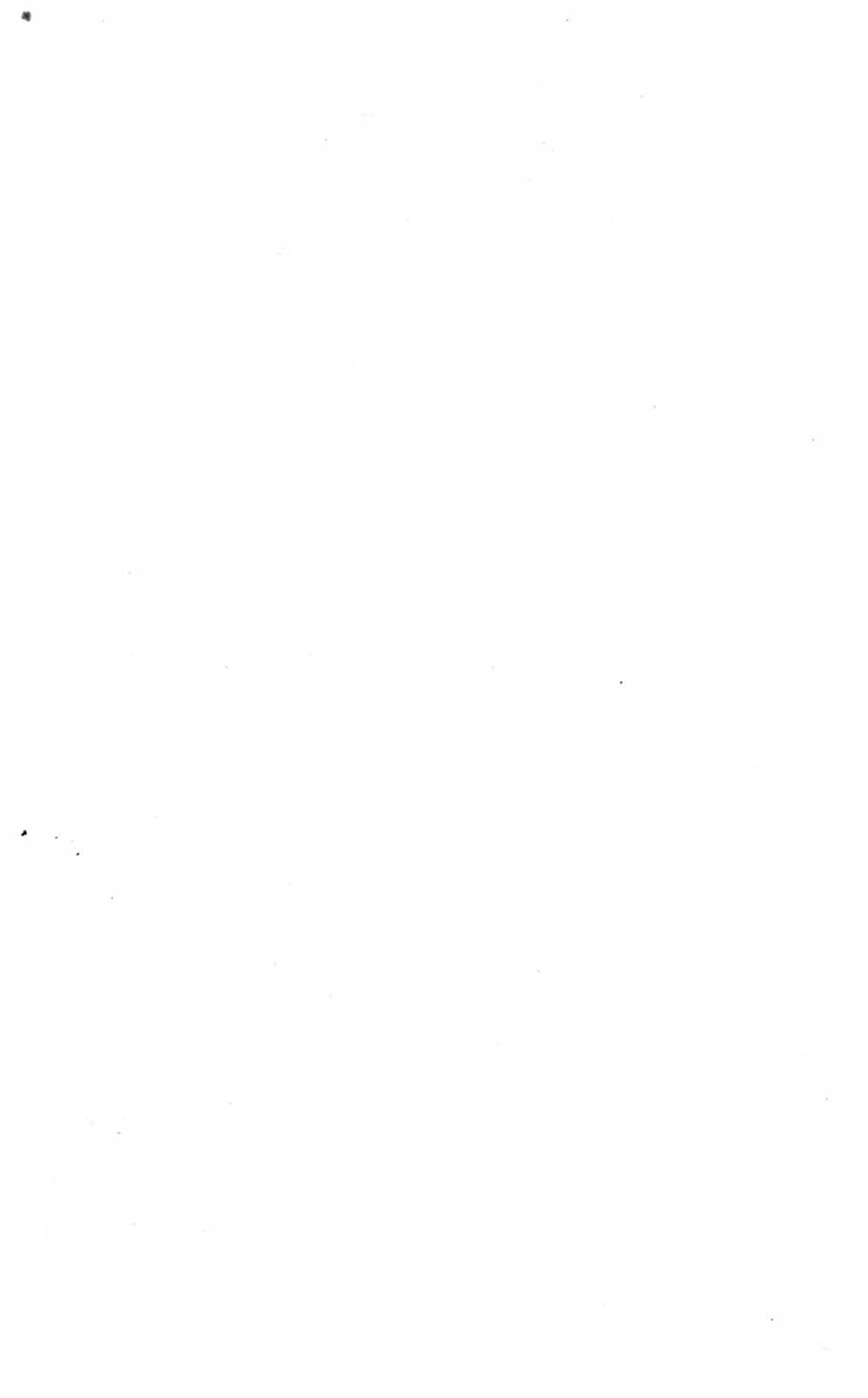
the climate of Melbourne is not an agreeable one, with its wet winter, its cold sharp winds, and its violent heat-waves in summer; whilst its surroundings both inland and by the sea-shore are far ~~inferior~~ to those of the older city, which stands in the midst of the most beautiful coastal and mountainous scenery to be found in all Australia. Melbourne for the indoor life, and Sydney for the open air, would seem pretty well to express the average stranger's opinion on the rival merits of these two cities as places of residence.

At Melbourne I embarked on board one of the fine boats of the Ocean Steamship Company, or Blue Funnel Line, which make their Australian voyages by way of the Cape. Having sailed out of Port Phillip in dull, showery weather, we spent the greater part of the following day in steaming past the Coorong, that long lean strip of sand-dune which divides Lake Alexandrina and the mouth of the River Murray from the outside ocean. Early on the following morning we were approaching the harbour of Adelaide, where we were due to remain three days for purposes of loading cargo, a delay I was glad to avail myself of, since I had obtained but a fleeting glimpse of Adelaide on my way out.

We anchored in the outer harbour, at the edge of a wide stretch of salt marsh that in the month of September was positively ablaze with patches of the shining yellow African daisy (miscalled dandelion out here) and the gaudy mauve stars of the mesembryanthemum, which in Australia rejoices in the unpoetic name of "pig's face." Tufts of glaucous wild artichoke and a few stunted golden wattles that were festooned in wreaths of the wild clematis made some variety in this wide flat expanse of sand and salt ooze.

Travelling up to Adelaide itself in the little local train over the intervening flats, I found myself being constantly





reminded of the approach from Civita Vecchia towards Rome, which latter resembles Adelaide in its setting on a broad plain betwixt sea and hills. I had often heard and read previously of the supposed similarity of scene and climate between Italy and Australia, yet it was here, at Adelaide, that I grew to realise the justice of the comparison. For here the soft verdant slopes of the Mount Lofty range to eastward and the rolling downs at their feet certainly recall strongly the Alban Hills and the open sward of the Roman Campagna ; moreover, the grey and violet shadows flitting across the Mount Lofty hill-sides and the clear sparkling atmosphere strongly reminded me of the distant views from the Eternal City. As we neared the suburbs of Adelaide, the many gardens filled with fig and almond trees just bursting into leaf or bloom, together with the frequent olive orchards, and even the spreading masses of that cheerful but noxious weed, the yellow oxalis, all spoke to me forcibly of the scenery of Southern Italy.

Adelaide, with a population of about one hundred and twenty thousand, has a clean, prosperous and decidedly finished appearance, and these advantages are at least indirectly due to the foresight and energy of Colonel Light, who drew out the city plans in 1839 on so liberal a scale and in so sensible a manner that every opportunity was granted to the newly founded township to expand without fear of congestion. The whole of the central quarter of the city is encircled by a broad belt of public gardens and parks, some two thousand acres in extent, beyond which have sprung up in later years a number of suburbs ; yet no matter how the population may wax, there must always remain abundant space and greenery in the heart of the city proper. There are broad clean streets, good public buildings, and a climate that is sharp and bracing in winter and hot and dry in summer. Adelaide has sometimes been

nick-named the "City of the Saints" by certain irreverent Australians of other States on account of the superfluity of its churches and the alleged superabundant piety of its inhabitants; certainly the twin spired towers of the Anglican cathedral seem to obtrude themselves prominently into every vista in the city. The Art Gallery here, though smaller than those of Sydney and Melbourne, contains a remarkably good collection of modern pictures, chiefly of the latter-day English school, which include fair examples of Watts, Burne-Jones, Collier, Waterhouse and others. It has also the almost unique distinction amongst British galleries of owning a work by that eminent Milanese painter, Giovanni Segantini, who is represented here by a characteristic study of an Alpine peasant woman spinning in a byre beside her cow.

I duly accomplished the regular excursion up Mount Lofty, whither the citizens retreat to escape the intense summer heats and where many of the wealthy residents have built themselves fine villas. The line passes through the flat rich plain with its frequent suburbs, and then begins to ascend the range, which is rocky in character and well stocked with gum-trees, beneath whose shade I noticed numbers of wattles, gorse bushes and sweet genista all gay with their golden glory of early spring. The railway banks, too, were bright with many of the lovely native flowers, though it was still rather early in the season. There are superb views from these hill-tops down to the plain below, with its spreading city and background of boundless blue ocean. For several miles the line traverses the glens and groves of National Park, a natural reserve of Bush and scrub and rock that has been set aside for the use of the people, and yet allowed to continue in its primeval conditions. As I have already mentioned, areas of the same type and under the same system have been set aside for public enjoyment by

the municipalities of other large cities in Australia; and it would be impossible to extend too high praise for this thoughtful rescue in good time of natural beauties close to growing cities, so as to save them thus for the general good from the greed of the vandal and the speculator.

Arrived at Mount Lofty, I made my way to the summer residence of Dr Stirling, whose famous gardens I was fortunate enough to have permission to inspect. These were charmingly laid out, and though the season was little advanced I was able to observe many plants of beauty and interest, including a group of three varieties of waratah in bloom. Amongst such a wealth of cultivated plants, I was especially struck by a specimen of the rare bronze-tinted lily-palm (*Cordyline australis*), whose graceful foliage appeared of a glorious shining bronze hue.

I descended towards sunset, much enjoying the lovely views of fertile plain and towered city and calm ocean that one gains from time to time. Certainly little Adelaide, in its exquisite setting between blue sea and green hills, can hold its own against the boasted beauties of Sydney and Brisbane.

Our boat left Port Adelaide in the dead calm of a dull, grey, oppressive afternoon, and the next morning we were encountering rough seas and cold winds in the dreaded Bight. On the morning of the fourth day we had our last look at Australia, as we passed near the wild rocky coast-line not far from Albany. From that day for a full fortnight we had naught but the barren fields of ocean to gaze upon, and the only objects of interest were the splendid albatrosses and molly-hawks that followed our vessel in expectation of morsels, and even these grand birds deserted us when we passed into the calm blue waters of the Indian Ocean, with its warm, humid atmosphere. On a

Sunday morning early we were in sight of the Natal coast, with its rufous soil and long lines of rocky hills inland, and by breakfast-time we were anchored below the base of the Bluff, which forms the western entrance to Port Natal and faces the city of Durban. Above us rose steep banks covered with dense tropical scrub, amidst which I was able to enjoy a most interesting ramble along a track cut through the thickets. Never have I seen so many butterflies within so short a space of time as I did during that walk, many of them being of remarkable size and beauty. Amongst them I was particularly interested by the various leaf-imitating butterflies; one of a pale buff colour counterfeited a brown or dead leaf, and another, the elegant "Mother o' Pearl," when settled on the green herbage, at once assumed a lovely green tint that made it indistinguishable from the surrounding vegetation.

I found Durban itself full of gay colour, with its mixed population of Kafirs and Indians, and with its barbaric Zulus, who were laden with gaudy trappings and wore horns on their bedizened heads. These latter, whose strange appearance and ornaments form quite a feature of the life of Durban, are the drawers of the rickshaws, which, as at Colombo, are much patronised by the citizens. Durban is a very hot place, despite its ocean breezes, and has quite the air of a tropical city. To the east of the central quarters rises the Berea, the chief residential district of the town, which is full of pleasant homes surrounded by gardens that are filled with all the shrubs and plants of the tropics.

From Durban to the Cape it is a rough and generally very disagreeable stretch of two or three days. Arriving at Cape Town, we anchored in the roadstead outside the inner harbour, with a rather heavy sea running. It was a gloomy morning, but by being up betimes I was rewarded by a good sight of

Table Mountain clearly defined against a background of wild stormy sky. By eight o'clock the "tablecloth" of white mist had already begun to settle on its sharp-cut rim, after which it started slowly to descend, until the greater portion of the mountain was completely blotted out. A few hours' ramble on shore revealed many things of interest, not the least of these, to my mind, being the picturesque old houses with their quaint gables and windows and plateresque fronts of early Dutch colonial days, which seemed pretty numerous in the poorer quarters of the town. About noon down came the expected rain, and I was glad to escape once more to the ship, and to clamber, not without some feats of agility, from the tossing launch up the companion ladder.

For the fourteen days that intervene between leaving Table Bay and reaching Las Palmas we sighted no land, except for a glimpse of Cape Verde, with the town of Dakar and the historic islet of Goree with its fort, that lie near this African headland. We had terribly hot and damp weather on entering the tropics, and the sight of Cape Verde grilling in the pitiless sunshine served to make me more contented with the ship life and its comparative coolness. At length we came in sight of the tall lighthouse that marks the southern point of the Grand Canary, the central island of the Canary Archipelago. The scenery was imposing as we coasted along, the Gran Canaria rising to a height of some six thousand feet, its sides torn and gashed with immense gloomy ravines, whilst the plains were distinguished by strange contorted cliffs and rocky tumps of volcanic origin. Behind these rugged slopes of the Grand Canary towered the lofty Peak of Teneriffe, hanging phantom-fair in the pale blue sky, with lines of pure white cirrus clouds forming and melting across its face. By noon we were anchored in the harbour of Las Palmas, the capital of the island, a

picturesque little city of flat-roofed houses washed pink or white or yellow, and with its large baroque cathedral dominating all. We had no time to go ashore, but some diversion was caused by the invasion of many dozens of the inhabitants, whose boats surrounded our vessel. Many of these hucksters came on board, bringing with them fruit, cigars, photographs, shawls and ornaments; in short, all the medley of rubbish that one sees offered for sale at every cosmopolitan port the whole world over, which there are always found persons ignorant or extravagant enough to purchase. Still it was an amusing scene, and the mass of small boats dancing on the clear blue waters of the roadstead presented an animated picture.

After quitting Las Palmas we soon struck grey wet weather with heavy seas until we finally reached our destination of Liverpool, after a six weeks' voyage since leaving Adelaide. In my opinion there is little to choose between the two Australian routes, through the Suez Canal or by way of the Cape. The former is certainly a few days shorter, but the Cape voyage is, I think, preferable to those who love the sea. The Cape route, moreover, possesses the additional advantage of being appreciably cheaper than that pursued by the mail steamers, which of course follow the more direct course between England and Australia. Doubtless the best plan is to do what I myself did—to go out by the Suez Canal and to return by the more open route by way of Durban, Table Bay and the Canaries.

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